

MY DISOBEDIENCE.

BY E. J. WHITNEY.

It was one of my bad days. Everything had gone wrong from the time I had gotten out of bed, so I was quite desperate when father refused to let me go fishing with the village boys.

"I am surprised that you should ask such a thing, Leon, when you know we must finish planting corn to-morrow," he said, a trifle sternly, as I preferred my request.

"It's nothing but dig, dig all the time, and you never let me go anywhere or do anything I want to," I muttered wrathfully, as I spitefully slammed the door.

"O Leon!" exclaimed little May, my especial pet, as she came running to me. "O Leon, you've forgotten how papa let you stay two weeks last month with cousin Brian."

"Hold your tongue!" I growled, rudely, for it only made me angrier to feel that I was in the wrong.

"He won't go very soon again if he don't behave better, I guess," put in Mysia, who was two years older than I, and put on airs accordingly.

"I'll go when I'm a mind to, miss; help yourself if you can," savagely.

"How smart I am!" tauntingly.

"I hate you, My. Hastings!" I shrieked, stamping in ungovernable rage. "I hate every one of you, and I wish I could go where I should never see one of you again."

"No, you don't, Leon," laughed my pet, "you'd want to see me right off," trying to slip her wee hand in mine.

"No, I shouldn't, you little plague!" giving her a violent push to the floor.

"O you wicked boy!" screamed Mysia. "I'll tell papa, and you'll catch it," trying to raise the still form.

The loving blue eyes were closed, the small hands fell helplessly, and Mysia burst into a flood of tears, shrieking wildly:

"Mamma, mamma, little May is dead!"

This wild cry brought the whole family to the door. Such a pale set face as papa had, and mamma was as white as new fallen snow, but she was calm and spoke so lovingly, "Don't cry so, dear children."

But her calmness was gone when she found our darling was alive, and she cried aloud when papa, the tears streaming down his face, fell on his knees and thanked God for sparing our choicest treasure.

There was a long deep cut on May's head, and her long flossy curls (the pride of my heart) were remorselessly clipt, and a strip of plaster put on. But she smiled bravely, saying over and over:

"Leon didn't mean to hurt me. Please don't punish him, papa, 'cause he's sorry."

"Dear little angel!" said papa, huskily, as he gave the required promise.

I don't believe any one could feel worse than I did all this time. I didn't feel as if I could ever look any one in the face again, for I was thoroughly frightened, repentant and ashamed. But my temper was not conquered, although I flattered myself it was;

especially after the tender talk with papa and mamma.

"O my son," said mamma, as she kissed me good-night. "If there had been a half inch's difference in the way May fell to-day, she would be with the angels now, and this hand," pressing it gently, "moved by the demon of ill temper, would have been guilty of her death."

"I am so sorry," I sobbed.

"I know it, dear, but let it be a solemn warning to you forever."

"I do try real hard to be good, mamma," in a low tone, "but I get mad so easy."

"There is One, my darling, who, if you humbly ask, and strive, will give you the greatest victory in the world, that is, over yourself."

The summer passed swiftly away, and the ice-king with his elves, was busy decorating every tiny shrub with shining bells, and building a crystal roof over the singing streams.

"Hallo!" shouted Rex Kingsley, as he stopped a moment at the gate, "aren't you going skating to-night?"

"Father says the ice isn't strong enough," I replied, sulkily.

"Mr. Lansing crossed the pond this morning," said Rex.

"I wouldn't risk my neck if Lansing does his," coolly. "You had better go home, my boy, and not tease Leon to go with you and drown in company," said my father.

"I'll risk drowning, Mr. Hastings, when the ice is strong enough to bear teams;" and Rex marched off very red in the face.

"I can't imagine what Kingsley is about to let that boy of his go wherever he chooses," said father.

"He's a lucky fellow," I muttered.

"You won't think he is quite so lucky when he is carried home half dead," was the reply.

"I had rather die than live as I do," I cried, desperately, "for I can't do a thing I want to do."

"Leon," father exclaimed, sternly, "you will get a horse-whipping if you don't look out."

How my blood boiled at this threat; for I was just at the age when one feels as if one had wisdom to judge the world, and is deep in the mysteries of a first mustache. To be sure, my efforts were futile, but my struggles were immense.

Hadn't I gone home with Nettle Ray for a year, and had serious thoughts of marrying at an early day? And after all this I was threatened with a horse-whipping! It was more than I could bear, and I resolved to run away from home if I could not have my own way more.

Now, I know what it is to make my way in the world, and how little one can consult one's own wishes when working for strangers. Then, I thought it easy to climb to the topmost round of Fame; now I know one cannot succeed in anything without courage and perseverance.

My first piece of independence was to steal out of my chamber when my parents were asleep, strap on my skates, and have a moonlight ramble on the pond. My courage rose as I was undetected, and when the boys proposed a grand skating night, I was eager as any for the time to arrive.

We had set the night, but a heavy rain coming on we were obliged to postpone it several times.

Several people, in attempting to cross the pond, had broken through the ice and come near drowning, but we boys thought one good freeze would set the ice all right.

"Some of those boys will get drowned," said father, as a crowd of boys went down towards the pond. "The ice isn't half strong enough to bear so many people."

I smiled grandly as I thought how much better I knew than he did, and Mysia wanted to know what mischief I was planning. I didn't condescend to reply to this query, but retired with an imposing air.

O how impatient I was to join my companions! How my heart beat as I crept silently out of the house, and ran down to the pond! My conscience reproved me severely, for I knew I was doing a mean thing in deceiving my parents.

O how lovely it was! The moonlight shimmered over the shining ice, and played hide and seek in the woods beyond. The pearly-tinted air rang with the shouts and laughter of the merry skaters.

As I skated toward the centre of the pond I was frightened to feel the ice bend beneath my feet, but I forgot it the next moment in the excitement of watching a race between Neil Ralston and Harry Vaughn.

All at once there was an ominous cracking of the ice, then a loud report, and I, with many others, was precipitated into the water. Down, down I went, the water fill-

ing my mouth and ears, till I thought my last hour was come, and my past life rose like a spectre before me.

With a desperate effort I rose to the surface and tried to grasp a fragment of ice, but my arm hung powerless by my side, and with a despairing cry I sank beneath the cold waves.

When I came to myself my mother's anxious face was bending over me, then all was a blank, and I knew no more for several weeks. A broken arm and the exposure

had set me into a fever, and kept me a prisoner until spring.

O how hard it was to lie on my bed and hear the merry shouts of my schoolmates as they skated or coasted! but it was my own fault, and I could not complain.

How sorry and ashamed I was of my escapade, and how earnestly I begged forgiveness, I need not say.

Well, that experience cured me, and my father never found fault with my want of obedience again.

MY FATHER'S WIFE.

BY MISS MARY J. FIELD.

Drip, drip, drip! the rain came pattering down on the window-panes—drip, drip, drip! Would it never leave off? I wondered vaguely. Would it always be so dreary? and should I always feel as wretched as I did on that momentous day, when I stood behind the old red curtain in the drawing-room, looking out at the misty landscape, and waiting to receive—my stepmother?



“DRIP, DRIP, DRIP!”

Yes: she and my father were to arrive to-day, and I was to be introduced to her. How I hated her! With all the intensity of a warm, uncontrolled nature, with all the jealousy of wounded love. Twenty times the previous night, amidst my tears, I had vowed that I could never, come what might, even tolerate her; twenty times this morning, as I had bathed my swollen eyes and tried to compose my features, I had reiterated my vow; and now ten minutes, or even less, would bring me face to face with her. On her alone I concentrated all my thoughts. Of my father I dared not think, or those rebellious tears would rise again. Had not he and I been perfectly inseparable since the day that my dying mother had left me, a child of six years old, to his care? He

had taught me all I knew; I had grown up sharing his every thought, his every feeling; for years we had struggled hand in hand against the bitter poverty that sometimes threatened to overwhelm us, and now she—his wife—would step in and take him away from me. Oh, it was cruel! it was intolerable!

I cannot attempt to excuse all the wicked thoughts that surged up in my heart since the day that I heard that my father was to be married again. I was motherless; all my life I had been spoiled, and I was very, very miserable. That is all I can plead in my defence.

I now pulled down the blind, in order to darken the room so that my red eyes should not show. The tassel came off in my hand, and with a bang the blind fell down, displaying a yawning rent in its yellow surface. Truly a nice house for a bride to come to! At the same moment there was a sound of wheels, and I espied, through the aforementioned rent, the railway-fly come lumbering up the weed-grown drive.

I looked down at my shabby dress, and smoothed my hair, longing to hide myself somewhere—somewhere so as not to meet my father. I did not mind my stepmother. In my—must I call it by its right name?—vulgar pride, I argued that she was only a manufacturer's daughter. To her I felt proud of my shabby old dress, of the absence of paint on the walls. Were they not all tokens of departed glories, when the Lacys had impoverished themselves in the Pretender's cause? But how meet my father, now that he belonged to some one else?

“Nell, where are you?” rang out in his own bright, cheery tones, recalled me to the fact that I must emerge from my hiding-place and face them both. Slowly I opened the door, and in another minute was in my father's arms, my heart dancing with joy and triumph. I was his still. He loved me best. I could tell it by his voice, by his face, by his manner. I was still the apple of his eye. I need not fear my stepmother.

Hitherto I had not looked at her, but

now my father drew me toward her, and very courteously, very charmingly, but not lovingly, introduced her to me. She put out a small, exquisitely well-gloved hand, and took my cold and unwilling one.

"I am so glad to know you," she said, in a low, soft voice. "I have heard so much of you from" — And here she stopped and looked up at my father. I did not like that look. It seemed to me that she, a stranger, looked at him, as I might have done, as though he were her own possession. I answered nothing, but merely held rigidly aloof from the kiss I saw she intended to give me, and suggested there was lunch ready in the dining-room. I followed humbly behind Mrs. Lacy's long flowing silk skirt, and said to myself that she was vulgarly overdressed, having about as much idea of the fashions as our own two old servants.

And now came the first act of deposition. There were three places laid instead of the familiar two, and mine was at this side.

"You are nearer to me now, my child," said my father, quickly reading all my feelings.

It was a wretched, constrained little lunch, during which I had plenty of time to observe my stepmother. She was very plain. I was glad of that. If she had been pretty, she might have won me over, for I loved beauty; but that sallow skin, that wide mouth, that dead-brown hair could never attract me. Her eyes were soft and luminous, and her figure was perfect; but what else there had been to fascinate my father I could not conceive. It made me angry, too, to hear him apologizing for the terrible shabbiness of the house.

"It is very old," I put in, for the first time addressing Mrs. Lacy, with a feeling of ineffable scorn for the gilded but mushroom beauties she had no doubt enjoyed at her own home. My father laughed.

"Nell is terribly particular," he said. "I really think she likes worn-out carpets and paintless walls. What shall you say, my pet," turning to me, "when an army of painters and upholsterers invade these sacred precincts, and we shall enjoy the luxury of being tidy, not to say smart?"

"Well!" I gasped, in amazement. "Why, father, we cannot afford it."

Father laughed, and Mrs. Lacy looked down on her plate, as though she were ashamed of herself; and I felt there was a

mystery which I did not understand, and retired into a dignified and sulky silence.

After lunch, my father bade me put on my hat and come out with him.

"You will want to rest, my dear," he said to his wife, and she quietly acquiesced in the arrangement. As I passed through the hall, a maid, infinitely better dressed than I was, was walking up the stairs. Was my father mad, that he could indulge his wife in these luxuries? or what was it?

I walked out by his side in silence, hurt and indignant, till he put his hand under my chin and looked into my face.

"What is it, darling?" he asked. "What has upset you?"

"You never had a secret from me before," I burst out, "and now I know nothing."

He stared. "Why, child, there is no secret," he said; "do you mean about the house being done up?"

"Yes."

"I thought," he almost faltered, "I had conveyed to you by my letters that I should be much better off now, that our miserable struggle is to come to an end at last; that — in fact — you understood Mrs. Lacy is — has — a large fortune."

I am afraid I looked my horror, for my father, my dear father, actually half apologized to me.

"You see, Nell, you are growing up now: it was needful you should have some education, and a lady's companionship; and I could nowhere have found a wiser or better moth — chaperone for you than I know Mrs. Lacy will be. She is as good as she is clever, and you must learn to love her, darling."

I only tucked my arm into his. He was still mine, heart and soul, that was very plain; but, oh! the horrible feeling that we should be rich and comfortable, and owe it all to my despised stepmother. Worse, however, than even this was the thought that my father had sunk in my estimation; that he, to whom I had always so looked up, should have done this thing. It was only after some years that I understood my father had married again for my sake.

A week after this, a week spent with my father by day and in tears by night, we all went to Brighton, whilst one of the best London upholsterers and decorators was left to work his will on the dear old house. My father and Mrs. Lacy had, I found, chosen

all the carpets, curtains, and papers during their wedding trip, so there was nothing left to be done in that way. I could not get over it, and I cried as though my heart would break the night before I bade adieu to my shabby bedroom, never to see its faded beauties again.

I could not quite understand Mrs. Lacy. She seemed to leave my father and me to each other's companionship as much as we pleased, and she made no further attempts to embrace me; she was only very gentle in manner, and once or twice I found trifling wishes I had expressed fulfilled, without fuss or trouble. Our two old servants, who had nearly broken their hearts over the change, were quite won over by her manner; and I could not but, in my secret soul, indorse their opinion, that she was "quite the lady." They staid on in spite of all the new servants that arrived, one as housemaid and the other as my own personal attendant, as I rejected with scorn the idea of a lady's maid.

At Brighton, I found I was to go through the process of being converted into the ordinary nineteenth-century young lady. I had singing, drawing, and music masters; I had pretty dresses, and a well-made riding-habit, all of which made me wretched; and had it not been for my father actually entreating me to take advantage of these benefits, I could not have brought myself to accept them at the hands of my stepmother. For every day I grew to dislike her more; not for any fault in herself, for I was obliged to confess that she was perfectly well-bred, and immeasurably my superior in intellect and education. She could talk when she chose, and talk well; she sang beautifully, and she was an omnivorous reader. Yellow and blue paper books, in what seemed to me all languages, were scattered about her room; and she would digest the toughest reviews and magazines, which made my father yawn.

"You are too clever for me, Anne," he said one day, at the end of an argument. "I cannot enter the lists with a blue-stock-ing."

She colored scarlet, and a wistful look shot over her face; but she said nothing, and I felt eminently triumphant.

After this, I noticed that the yellow and blue books were put away, and lighter literature began to prevail.

My father was very happy. He and I

rode together every day; and it almost seemed as though our old close relationship were to be renewed, with Mrs. Lacy as a convenient supernumerary. Certainly she never interfered with us. She had her own friends, her carriage, and her books; and I had my father, and my studies, which I could not help enjoying, although I tried hard to prevent myself doing so.

My stepmother's brother, who happened to be in London, accepted her invitation, and ran down to Brighton for a few days. My father and I were out riding at the time of his arrival, so we found the brother and sister *tete a tete* over their five-o'clock tea when we came in.

"You see he is arrived," said Mrs. Lacy, turning to my father, as he entered the room; and I was surprised at the bright, cheery voice, and still more at the dancing light in her eyes, and the color in her cheeks.

I bowed silently and rigidly as I was introduced to Mr. Garforth, and sat down at the extreme verge of the circle in solitary dignity. I had made up my mind that I would have nothing to do with my stepmother's relations. There was no harm, however, in looking to see what Mr. Garforth was like; and I was surprised to find him a very gentlemanlike-looking man, resembling his sister, — with the same mournful eyes, and the same good figure. He and my father chatted away pleasantly enough; they seemed to have many common friends. Mrs. Lacy joined in, and I began to feel myself rather out in the cold; so, under the pretext of taking off my habit, I withdrew.

Mr. Garforth staid with us a week, and Mrs. Lacy seemed a different woman. She talked and laughed and rode with us, and, under cover of her brother's protection, displayed a sense of fun and merriment I had never suspected in her. Still, at times I could detect those wistful looks she sometimes cast at my father; but she continued as perfectly cold and undemonstrative to him as ever, and I hardened myself in the idea that she had married him for position, as he had married her for her money.

That was a trying week for me; for I had determined to hold myself utterly aloof from the brother and sister, and, as my father seemed to find their talk agreeable, I was forced to sit a silent listener only.

Mrs. Lacy tried to draw me into the con-

versation; but I refused all advances, and she finally left me alone. I could not, however, close my ears; and being, I am sorry to say, rather a critic by nature, it did not escape me, that, in intellect and observation, my father fell far short of the Garforths.

I cannot deny that it was a pleasure to me, as I sat silent and moody, to listen to their talk; and once, when an argument was waxing rather hot, I leaned forward eagerly to hear what Mr. Garforth was going to say.

He happened to look up; and caught my eye, and smiled.

"Do you, too, take an interest in politics, Miss Lacy?" he asked.

"I hate Radicals," I answered shortly and irrelevantly.

My father looked pained. Mr. Garforth did not seem to hear, but Mrs. Lacy—ah! how I hated her—put her hand over her mouth to hide a smile, and I knew that I had been silly,—not to say unladylike. My father gave me almost the first reproof I had ever heard from his lips, after breakfast.

"You should not be so *prononcee*, my darling," he said; "it does not suit you. Although I myself do not agree in Garforth's political opinions, yet I do not like to hear my child rude."

I had much difficulty in keeping back my tears, but fell back as usual on my bad temper.

"I wonder, father," I said as I caressed him, "you can argue with such people; I am sure I would not, red-hot Radicals as they are."

"You are not old enough to understand those things yet, dear," he said. "Philip Garforth is neither red-hot nor a Radical; he is what is called a Liberal. He means very well," he added with condescension.

I must confess that when Mr. Garforth left, little attention as he had bestowed on me, I missed him, and so I think did my father. He was heartily tired of Brighton, and longed to return to Tawthworth. Once or twice now he begged Mrs. Lacy to accompany us in our rides, but she always refused, and I thought—O agony of jealousy!—that he looked disappointed. One day, however, she seemed on the point of yielding.

"Would you really like me to ride?" she asked, almost eagerly.

"Pray do as you please," responded my father; "on no account come, if you do not like it." And she did not accompany us.

A fortnight later we returned home, my father joyously anticipating the new order of things, I equally dreading it. The garden looked trim and tidy as we drove up the avenue; the house much as usual outside, the old brickwork still enveloped in ivy, the diamond panes of glass left. Inside it was—I was obliged to own it—perfect; everything was in character with the old house; there were no glaring tints, no startling effects, but all quiet, almost sombre, and toned down. I was quite disappointed; I could not find fault. "Well, Nell," said my father, "even you, darling, must be satisfied; it is very perfect, is it not? and all Anne's taste." It was the first time he had ever called her Anne to me. I looked up. Anne stood by, flushed and smiling. I thought it was triumph. "I liked it better as it was," I answered, and ascended the staircase to find my own bedroom and sitting-room perfect nests of cozy beauty. I sat down and sobbed. To owe it all to her,—it was dreadful!

After this began quite a new life for me, who had never known what society was before. We invited people to stay with us, and we visited them in return; we had horses and carriages, and I began to make friends in the neighborhood, and to see something of my fellow-creatures. When June came round, I could hardly believe my ears when my father told me that we were actually to go to London for three weeks. I fairly clapped my hands with delight, and was very much annoyed that I had done so when I perceived that Mrs. Lacy looked pleased.

Never did such a complete "country cousin" set foot in the great metropolis as I was in those days. I had never seen London since I was four years old, and I found myself quite at the mercy of my stepmother, who knew every inch of it, and loved it, with all its dirt and smoke. Those three weeks were a perfect revelation to me, and taught me many a wholesome lesson. I learnt, even in that short space of time, that there are other things in the world besides good birth; I learnt to sound the depths of my own profound ignorance, to see people I despised, honored and distinguished, and above all I became aware of the infinite insignificance of the Lacy's.

Meanwhile my father and Mrs. Lacy seemed to vie with each other as to which should give me the most pleasure, and from morning to night I lived in a whirl, with the pleasing sensation that I was always well and suitably dressed. I was surprised to find what a large acquaintance Mrs. Lacy possessed. Invitation cards poured into our letter-box, mostly from her friends; for my father, in the days of his poverty, had dropped out of sight and mind of his former companions, and he was too shy and too proud to look them up again. Mr. Garforth was as much with us as his duties as M. P. would allow him; and, thanks to him, I had the pleasure of listening to an important debate, of seeing polo played, of going to the opera, and of joining in many other varied amusements of the London season. Still I kept him at arm's-length, and left him entirely to the society of his sister.

The next night, I was to make my *debut* at my first party. It was at the house of one of Mr. Lacy's friends, and I had been very anxious to refuse to go, but my father insisted on the invitation being accepted. I was the more inclined to be sulky because he was not asked, and I was to be chaperoned by my stepmother only. I had made up my mind I should not dance, as I did not care to be introduced to Mrs. Lacy's friends, and I knew no one else. I found when I got there that I need not have troubled myself; nobody asked me to dance, and I discovered that a London ball-room is excellent medicine for country vanity. Mrs. Lacy had not been to balls for some years before her marriage, and knew no dancing-men.

After I had stood silent and mortified through four or five dances, I saw a Miss Clitheroe come in with her mother, and close behind her Mr. Garforth.

"You here, Philip?" exclaimed my stepmother in surprise. "Why, what brings you here?"

"Yourself, of course," he responded. "I am come to look after you."

He shook hands with me, and then asked his sister to dance the waltz that was going on with him.

"I cannot," she said, though she looked as if she would have liked to do so.

"Pray do not think of me," I said with my loftiest air. "I will keep your chair for you."

"If you will allow me," said Mr. Gar-

forth, "Mr. Clitheroe would much like to be introduced to you, Miss Lacy."

I colored, and felt inclined to refuse, but then reflected I might stand there all night, and so unwillingly consented to make Mr. Clitheroe's acquaintance. After this I got on very well. My hostess brought up several men, and introduced them to me, and I found myself enjoying it extremely. It was only toward the end of the evening that Mr. Garforth asked me if I had a dance to spare. "I am engaged," I answered, "till we go away," little thinking it was entirely owing to him that I was engaged at all. He departed serene as he had arrived, and it provoked me that I could detect no shadow of disappointment on his face. I was vexed with myself, though I should have done the same thing over again; no! I would have nothing to do with my detested stepmother's relations.

All good things come to an end at last, and so did our three weeks in London. We returned to Tawtworth, with little of our country rust rubbed off, with our ideas brightened and polished, and our—or rather my—mind expanded. My father was delighted with what he called my success in London; several people had admired me to him, and I am convinced that secretly he thought me the prettiest girl there.

We soon settled down quietly at Tawtworth, resuming our old life: my father and I always together, Mrs. Lacy with her poor people, her flowers, books, and piano. It struck me once or twice that she was very much altered in these few months. The wistful look had grown into a settled expression; the brown eyes were very sad. Once I was certain I saw them fill with tears, when my father, as he often did, put his arm round my waist, and drew me to him, and kissed me.

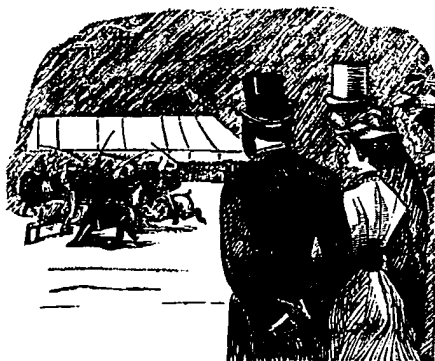
"My darling," he said, "you must never marry; what should I do without you?"

When I looked again at Mrs. Lacy, her face wore its usual calm expression, and I tried to believe I had been mistaken, and hardened my heart against her, as formerly. She had all she wanted, why should she seem unhappy?

Mr. Garforth came down to us every Saturday till Monday, and I could not hide from myself that I looked forward to those visits of his far more than I approved. In vain I took myself to task; in vain I measured the descent of the Lacys against the

insignificance of the Garforths, and made myself as distant and disagreeable as I could to Mr. Garforth. Saturday still con-

We had a very mild, warm September, and were from home a great deal, paying visits in the county for two or three days at a time.



SEEING POLO PLAYED.

tinued a red-letter day with me, and those summer Sunday evenings inexpressibly delightful. We used to spend them after dinner in the dim, fragrant garden, when the moon would look down on us with her cold, tender light, and all my better nature would rise in aspiration for I knew not what. Now and then Mrs. Lacy would sing soft, sweet, quiet songs, that made me long to steal away, and cry. Sometimes, but rarely, as we paced up and down the terrace, we would fall into two and two,—my father and his wife, Mr. Garforth and myself; but I never allowed this. At the first turn I

On our return from one of these, Mrs. Lacy found two letters awaiting her,—one from Miss Clitheroe, to tell her of her engagement to a certain Captain Curteis; the other from Mr. Garforth, announcing himself for the next day. Both letters gave me unbounded satisfaction, though I hid it under the mask of the most profound indifference; but my father did not seem at all equally well pleased.

“Miss Clitheroe going to be married!” he exclaimed. “Why, I thought you told me that Philip was to marry her.”

“I did hope it at one time,” she answered; “but it seems that Captain Curteis and Alice have been engaged for months, only her people would not hear of it. Philip is a very great friend of Captain Curteis, and has been his confidant all through; so when he and Alice were indulging in those prolonged talks together, which I thought would terminate very differently, they were discussing Captain Curteis and his prospects all the time. Philip was bound to secrecy hitherto; but, now that the affair has come all right, his lips are opened.”

So that was how it was; and I felt unaccountably and unreasonably glad.

I had had a passage at arms with Mrs. Lacy the previous week, in which I had come off victorious. The son of our rector, a boy of about seventeen, had presented me with a very large and handsome colley dog. To this dog being in the house, and the drawing-room, Mrs. Lacy objected; and I insisted that it should be. I appealed to my father, who had never refused me anything in his life; and he immediately acceded to my request. Mrs. Lacy gave in at once, nicely and gracefully; and there was no more said about it. My colley and I became inseparable; and, wherever I went, he went too.

On the 20th of September,—how well I remember the day!—Mr. Garforth arrived; and I clad myself in moral buckram, and



“FELL SENSELESS ON THE GROUND.”

would twitch at my father's coat, and draw him to myself, and leave Mr. Garforth to his sister.

prepared to act the distantly courteous as usual. He and my father were out shooting nearly every day, and of an evening we either strolled in the garden, or Mrs. Lacy sang. I generally took a book, and pretended to be immersed in it.

One evening—Mr. Garforth was going away the next day—it was excessively hot, and we were out on the terrace till half-past ten, Mr. Garforth the whole time in close confabulation with his sister, I unusually silent with my father. At half-past ten, Mrs. Lacy and I retired to our rooms, and the two gentlemen walked down to the village for a last cigar.

A lamp was burning in my tiny sitting-room, which adjoined my bedroom, when I went up-stairs, and here my dog stretched himself out, whilst I passed into the bedroom, and proceeded to unloose my hair. But I could not rest; I threw the window wide open, and, leaning half-way out of it, watched for two red sparks in the distance. But they were not visible. My head was so far out of the window that I could hear very little that was going on in the house; I did seem to have a certain consciousness of a slight crash behind me as it were, but I heeded it not; I was in the land of day-dreams.

With the glorious full moon shedding her clear cold rays upon me, I was soaring to dangerous regions. At last I grew weary of watching, and drew in my head, to encounter a blinding volley of smoke, with which the room was so densely filled that I could not see the door. Through it, however, I tried to make my way, and to my horror perceived little curling tongues of flame advancing to meet me. The house was on fire.

This fact I took in at once, and prepared to do battle for my life. Desperately I strode, or tried to stride, through the smoke which filled eyes, mouth, nose, and ears, and as I got toward my sitting-room the cruel flames in all their fury met my gaze. I stumbled horror-stricken over something lying across what had been the door, and fell senseless on the ground.

I shall never, never forget that dreadful waking, or rather all I woke to. It must have been about seven o'clock the next morning that I opened my eyes and found myself lying in the billiard-room, in an arm-chair. My dear old maid was near me, my father kneeling by my side,—no one else.

I tried to raise myself, and felt a cruel pain all down my arm and back.

"Am I burnt?" I asked feebly. "Where are they all? Is the house burnt?"

"Every one is saved, darling," said my father; "but you must keep very, very quiet."

I murmured something unintelligible in reply, and shut my eyes; when I next opened them, to my amazement, father had disappeared. The doctor came and attended to my burns, which were comparatively slight, and my maid staid with me, but my father did not return. I grew restless, and, refreshed with food, insisted on knowing what had happened. I was too much burnt to move, or I should have been running wildly about to see what damage had



"HE ASKED ME TO BE HIS WIFE."

been done. As it was, I was obliged to be content with old Maria's account of the fire, for still my father did not return, and I felt hurt beyond words at his non-appearance. But when Maria, with exasperating deliberation, commenced her story of the events of the night before, and told me how the fire had begun in my sitting-room—from what cause they knew not, as it was completely destroyed—I could think of nothing else. My thoughts flew back to the previous evening, when I had heard the crash, as I stood with my head out of window; and I dimly remembered thinking, as I crossed my sitting-room, how unsafe it was of the servant to put my lamp on a very small three-legged table I possessed.

"It must have been my lamp, Maria," I exclaimed, "which was upset somehow, and of course the mineral oil was in flames at once; but as the room was empty, I do not quite see how that can have been."

"It was the dog, my dear, depend upon it; he often knocked down the things downstairs, poor thing."

The tone and the words told me that my poor colley was dead.

"Oh! he did not suffer, I trust," I moaned, bursting into tears.

"We think he must have suffocated at once, dear; he was found lying under you."

So it was my poor dear old dog I had stumbled over. Then again, how had I been saved?

"Ah, that was your stepmamma, my dear," said old Maria; and I groaned. "She fought through the flames, and half dragged, half carried you out of them till she got to the staircase, and there she met Jones. He took and carried you in here, and when he came back he found the mistress with her brother, quite insensible."

"And how is she?—how is she?" I cried.

"She is very, very bad, dear," said old Maria, her eyes full of tears.

"Then I must, I will go to her," and I tried to rise. It was at this moment my father came into the room.

"O papa!" I cried, "tell me; it is not true, is it? Anne is not dangerously hurt?"

"I trust she will get better," he said, so gravely, his looks belying his words, that I put my head on his shoulder, and wept the bitterest tears I have ever shed. Of all intolerable feelings, is there any to equal that of remorse?

"My, darling," he said, and kissed me, "do not cry like that. you will make yourself ill; you are not the only one who have to reproach yourself."

"Let me see her; let me ask her pardon, and tell her how I love her," I entreated; but that might not be at present, and I was fain to lie still through those weary hours whilst my father was with Anne. Ah! if Anne had ever wished that any punishment might befall me for my conduct to her, she might have been amply satisfied now. Through those long, long hours, it seemed to me that my mental and bodily anguish combined was more than I could bear, and that death would be a welcome release. I could not cry any more; I could only tor-

ture myself by remembering all the sneering, unkind words and acts I had heaped on Mrs. Lacy since her marriage, till I groaned with loathing of myself; and old Maria would soothe me with kind, loving words, thinking it was the bodily pain.

Toward five o'clock in the afternoon the dear old rector and Mr. Garforth appeared, for Anne was at the rectory. I had only to look at Mr. Garforth's face to read the last bulletin. It was very stern, white, and set.

"Anne wishes to see you," he said, in what sounded a curiously unfeeling voice.

"And," added the rector, "we have a room all ready for you, my poor child, and you are to be made comfortable."

They carried me between them to the carriage, completely wrapped in blankets to exclude all air, and if I had been Anne herself Mr. Garforth could not have been more careful of me, though still with the same hard, set expression.

"How he hates me!" I thought, "and rightly too."

I was carried up to poor Anne's room, and laid on a sofa by the side of her bed. My father was with her, and she looked so happy; but she sent every one away, and staid alone with me. I could not speak; I hardly dared look; I could only cry.

And how good she was! She listened to the torrent of self-reproach I poured out on myself without interruption, knowing I could not be happy without it, and she spoke to me words of comfort, which seemed to soothe and heal my wounded spirit. She told me she had always hoped to win my love, and now she was perfectly happy.

"Promise me that you will get well," I said.

"I think, dear," she answered, with her sweet smile, "that the pain will soon pass away."

I took the words literally, without fathoming their hidden meaning, and felt comforted and re-assured. I was always in extremes, and now I felt unbounded hope.

I do not know how long I staid with her. I only remember that every minute I grew calmer and happier, till at last she told me one thing that made me turn red and white, and hot and cold.

"Nell," she whispered, for she was very weak,—"Nell, I want to tell you a secret which I hope you will not mind. I should not mention it now, but that I fear to wait. My brother, my dear Phillip, has lost his

heart to you; and although I ought not to tell you, I cannot help asking you not to repulse him until you have tried whether you could care for him a little. There is no one like him,—no one so good, so unselfish; and I must plead for him, for he would never plead for himself."

What could I say? What could I answer? Mr. Garforth like me, whom I thought he hated! it was incredible.

At this juncture, however, my father came into the room, and spared me my response, for he peremptorily forbade any further conversation. I gave Anne one long, loving kiss, and with a feeling of strange happiness was carried to the room prepared for me, and soon sank into a long, dreamless sleep.

Anne did not die, as she had anticipated. She was laid up for months, and her health was seriously impaired by the shock and the injuries she had sustained; but she lived. We were all very happy together, in spite of the serious grief of the half-demolition of our dear old home, and that of my stepmother being a complete invalid. There were sufficient rooms for us to live in left

standing, and those months that Anne spent on the sofa were some of the happiest, I think, of both our lives. We learnt really to know and love each other, and I could see my father's true affection for his wife without experiencing those pangs of jealousy that used to make me so miserable. To say that Anne was happy was no word for it. I had no conception of the depth and warmth of her feeling for my father. She simply idolized him; and to be in his presence, to know that he loved her, was quite enough for her.

And I was glad to think they were to be all in all to each other, for every day I was becoming more conscious of the secret Anne had imparted to me. Day by day the barrier I had erected between Mr. Garforth and myself gradually broke down, till one lovely February morning, standing together in the garden looking for violets, he asked me to be his wife. Then, when May came, and he took me away to his own home, I was thankful to think I left my dear father in such safe keeping,—thankful to think that he had had the good sense, and good taste, to choose for himself such a wife, and for me such a stepmother.

MY LOST LOVE.

BY N. P. DARLING.

"GOING out to Verona, eh?" said the tall gentleman.

"Yes sir, I'm going to try what I can do there; and as there's but one physician in town, I hope to succeed," I replied.

"O, you're a medical man, eh?" said the tall gentleman, glancing at me from the corner of his gray eyes. "By the way, I think I've heard of you; for you must know that I'm a Verona man."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, but I'm only a late arrival. Have only resided in Verona about three months. But as I was saying—what a confounded racket these cars make!—I think I heard my daughter speak of a young physician who was about to establish himself in our town, and if I remember, the name was Robinson."

"The very same."

"Eh? I thought so. Well, I'm glad to make your acquaintance, doctor. My

name is Couthony—Daniel Couthony, formerly of New York city. Was in the dry goods business there, made a small fortune, and now have retired to enjoy it."

Then we shook hands, and the tall gentleman continued, "I shall be happy to have you call upon me, doctor, anytime. I haven't many friends, or acquaintances rather, in Verona as yet, and sometimes the time hangs rather heavy on my hands. Drop in of an evening when you've nothing else to do. I can't promise you much in the way of entertainment, but Annie, my daughter, can play for you, and—" .

"I'm very fond of music," I said.

"Well, so am I," cried the tall gentleman. "If I hadn't been, I should have gone crazy with the infernal 'practising' I've had to listen to. Luckily, I've only one daughter, but by George! if I had another, she'd get her musical education away from home."

But my tall friend didn't have a chance to say any more, for just then the cars stopped at Verona, and we both got out, and there on the platform was my old friend George Splatts waiting for me.

"Ah Harry, glad to see you," cried George. "Come right along. I've got my carriage here, and can take you right up to the house. You can send for your baggage any time."

"Good-day," said the tall gentleman.

"Good-day, sir."

"Be sure and call." And my new acquaintance walked rapidly away.

"Why, Harry! that's old Couthony! How did you become acquainted with him?"

"O, I made his acquaintance this morning on the cars. We occupied a seat together. He invited me to call upon him."

"Lucky dog!" exclaimed George. "Why, the old gentleman has got a tremendous handsome daughter, my boy!"

"Yes, Annie," coolly.

"O, he's been talking to you about her, eh! Egad! I shouldn't wonder if you 'cut out' Tewky. I wish you could."

"Who is Tewky?" I asked, after getting into the carriage.

"He's a young lawyer, and I believe he is very much in love with Miss Couthony."

"And she?"

"O, I don't know anything about her. As I've not the honor of her acquaintance, I have only seen her, as yet, at a distance. I know that Tewky calls there quite often, and I've seen him riding out with her several times; but for all that, I don't think she's so far gone with love for the conceited puppy, as to hinder her falling in love with you. I'd try, anyway. A rich wife, my dear Harry, is something that a young physician in your circumstances can't afford to sneeze at."

"So, Mr. Tewky is of the same profession as yourself, George?"

"Yes, we are the only 'legal gentlemen' in town, and I don't think he is any honor to the profession," said my friend. "He's the most egotistical and disagreeable limb of the law I ever met, and that's saying a great deal; but if he should marry Mr. Couthony's daughter, why, man alive! Verona wouldn't be large enough to hold him. So, Harry, if you love your friend, do have pity on him, and take that handsome girl away from Tewky."

"Why, my dear fellow, I'm willing to do

anything in reason to accommodate an old friend, but I always have had an idea that I should like to marry to please myself," I answered, laughing. "You must remember that I haven't, as yet, seen Miss Couthony, and—"

"O, but she's handsome, Harry. Magnificent form!—stands about fifteen hands high. Splendid pair of eyes, black as a thunder-cloud, but as luminous as the same cloud with a streak of lightning flashing out of it. Hair as black as a black cat's back, and full as glossy. Ah! she's a fine creature, I assure you. Walks like a princess. You should see her foot and ankle! Skin like satin, soft, white—"

"Why, old fellow, I thought you'd only seen her at a distance?"

"Eh? O, I'll tell you about that. She walked past the office one day, and I took a peep at her through my opera-glass," said George.

"And one peep more, I think, would have turned your brain, my boy. Why don't you try to win her for yourself?"

"O, I'm engaged to just the nicest little girl in Verona, though she isn't handsome, and she has to teach school for a living; but she thinks the world of me, unworthy that I am. But, pshaw! what the deuce am I talking about! here we are at home."

We got down and went into the house together, and George took me up to my room, for you must know I was going to board with his mother, who was a widow, and not in very enviable circumstances. There he left me to prepare for dinner.

That afternoon I took possession of my office, and hung my banner on the outer wall, and as everybody in Verona seemed to be enjoying excellent health, I smoked my pipe and read the Medical Journal in Peace. When I had exhausted that, I opened my Shakspeare and read of the—

"Wonderful wooings,
And infamous doings"

of Richard of Gloster, till George came in and took me home to tea.

The next day, and the next, were about the same. Either the people of Verona were proof against all the diseases and disorders that ordinary flesh is heir to, or else they thought too much of their precious lives to trust themselves in the hands of a young and inexperienced physician, while old Dr. Codger was still to be had. When

he was away, and they couldn't find him, then they came for me; but that wasn't often, I assure you.

Well, it was the evening of my third day in Verona, and I was walking home to tea, humming "The Little Brown Jug," and wishing I had one, when who should I meet but my new friend the tall gentleman?

"Ah doctor! glad to see you. Going to see a patient?"

"Patient be —. I wish I had one," I growled.

"Ha, ha, doctor, I'm afraid you're getting discouraged."

"Not a bit of it, but I'm hipped."

"O, is that all? Then come home with me. We'll be just in time for tea," said Mr. Couthony, taking my arm.

I thought of his handsome daughter and consented, not that I had any more idea of falling in love with, and marrying her, my dear reader, than you have at the present moment; but I *am* fond of the ladies, I must confess, and I had entertained thoughts of marrying sometime, when the right woman came along, provided the right woman would have me. I was not handsome, I know, but I felt that if I didn't marry, it wouldn't be because I was

—"in want
Of personal beauty or grace,
For many a man with a wife
Is uglier far in the face."

I was muttering these lines to myself, when a perfect Adonis passed us. Mr. Couthony bowed rather stiffly to the "curled darling."

"Know him?" he asked.

"No sir. I think I've never seen him before."

"Well, that's Augustus Tewky, a young lawyer that transacted some business for me when I first came to town. I regret now that I didn't employ Lawyer Splatts, for this fellow is insufferable."

"Splatts is my particular friend," said I.

"Ah, indeed! I should like to know him, I like his looks. But here we are."

Mr. Couthony rang the bell, a servant opened the door, and I followed my tall friend into the drawing-room.

A vision of loveliness greeted my eyes.

"My daughter, doctor. Annie, this is Doctor Robinson, the gentleman whose acquaintance I made on the cars the other morning."

Miss Couthony bowed and gave me her little hand, and a "thrill leaped through my veins like wine."

"You must play for us after tea, Annie; for we're both feeling intolerably dull, from the same cause—nothing to do," said her father, smiling lovingly upon his only daughter.

An elderly lady appeared just then. It was Mrs. Couthony. I was introduced, and then we all went out to tea.

I sat opposite Miss Couthony, and feasted my eyes upon her beauty as much as I could without staring; and as her father did all the talking—he was determined to do that—I had nothing to do but think of her and look at her; and let me tell you, my young and unsophisticated friend, if you want to preserve your peace of mind, looking at and thinking of a beautiful young lady isn't the way to do it, I assure you.

Miss Couthony was not apparently much interested in me. I think she took a "comprehensive survey" of my countenance when I was introduced to her, and that probably satisfied her, for her glance never met mine again until we returned to the drawing-room and she was seated at the piano. Then, our eyes did meet once, and ah, what eyes hers were! They took my heart by storm, and I surrendered. If I *didn't* love her, will my kind and indulgent reader oblige me by informing me what was the matter? for I would really like to know.

I must confess that I passed a very pleasant evening, notwithstanding the fact that Miss Couthony seemed almost entirely oblivious of my presence, though when she did notice me she was studiously polite. She played whatever her father asked her to, but volunteered nothing; and when she retired from the piano, she left my entertainment to her father and mother—the latter, by the way, one of the dearest old ladies that ever I met, one whom, as I remarked to myself at the time, "Though I cannot call you mother at present, I most sincerely hope to call you by that name in the future."

The next morning at breakfast I met George.

"Where were you last night, Harry?" he asked, looking up from the muffin he was buttering, as I entered the room.

"I passed the evening at Mr. Couthony's," I answered, feeling a blush under my whiskers.

"And you saw her?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"She's *rather* handsome."

"Come, come, old fellow, none of that.

Own up—confess that she's the most beautiful woman you ever beheld, and that you are over head and ears in love with her. But did you see Mr. Tewky?"

"Not there; but I met him on the street, and he is handsome, and I think Miss Couthony is in love with him, for how could she be anything else?"

"Pshaw! women don't like handsome men."

"Well, then, perhaps Miss Couthony don't like Augustus Tewky. I can tell better about that when I see them together," I said.

"Of course you can. But I say, Harry, don't give up the ship. You've got into the fortress, and it's all easy work now. Do, if you love me (I know you love the girl), cut that confounded Tewky out, and, by George! I'll do anything for you—get a divorce for you, when you want one, and it shan't cost you a cent."

"Thank you, George; but if I'm going to want a divorce I think I won't marry."

"Pshaw! you *won't* want one, of course, with such a dear sweet girl as she is for a wife."

Well, I took my friend's advice, and called at Mr. Couthony's house very often; so often, in fact, that the old gentleman very soon suspected what I came after. But whether his daughter suspected or not I could not discover. However, as we grew better acquainted, she grew more sociable, and the time soon came when the old gentleman didn't have to remain in the drawing-room to entertain me, for Annie could do that very well alone, and she seemed to take pleasure in it; and now, when the dear girl sang to me, as she often did, her glorious eyes were not fixed upon the music before her, but they often looked up into mine, and O, wasn't it bewildering, enchanting and entrancing? I'm inclined to think it was.

But there was one thing that puzzled me. I never saw Mr. Augustus Tewky at the house, and I asked myself the meaning of it. Had she discarded him? It didn't seem possible. Even if she loved me—and I began to believe she did—she had had no opportunity to reject his addresses on my

account, for I was sure that he had not called at her house since my arrival in Verona.

But all this was explained one morning by Mr. Couthony himself.

I had been a resident of Verona now about two months, when one morning, as I sat in my office smoking my meerschaum and reading the paper, Mr. Couthony walked in, and taking a chair, declared that he'd something very particular to say to me.

"And I, my dear sir, am ready to listen to anything you have to communicate," I said. "You haven't come to seek medical advice?"

"Pshaw! no, I never was in better bodily health, doctor, in my life," answered he. "No, it's nothing about my health—it's about my girl."

How my heart beat, and my blood all rushed into my face!

"Ah! Annie—what of her?"

Mr. Couthony looked up into my face.

"Doctor, am I mistaken? Do you love her?"

Well, egad! this was a question for a father! Was he going to ask my intentions, etc., as they do out West? Did he think I was trifling with her?

"Excuse the question, doctor," he went on to say. "It may sound very strange to you, but under the circumstances, I feel a very strong interest in the matter. I think you are aware how much I think of you? The first time I saw you I liked you, and I like you better and better every day. Nothing could make me happier than to know—"

"Why, Mr. Couthony," interrupting him, "you must have known that I had an object in calling at your house so often, aside from the pleasure of seeing and conversing with you."

"I thought so. I was sure of it," he cried.

"And well you might be, for I have not tried to disguise my feelings in the least. Yes sir, I do love Annie, and I should be the happiest man in the world if I could make her my wife."

"And I should be the next happiest man," chimed in Mr. Couthony. "Now I think I told you that when I first came to Verona I employed a certain lawyer here, by the name of Augustus Tewky. He was at my house a great deal, and, of course, made the acquaintance of Annie. They became excellent friends, and I fear, lovers. I detested

the man from the bottom of my heart, for I soon discovered that he was nothing but an egotistical little puppy, without brains, without anything, in fact, but a pretty face and a smattering of law. I detested him; but what could I do? I don't believe in turning a young man out of doors because your daughter wants to marry him. As far as my experience goes, that is only striking the first note in the tune 'Haste to the Wedding,' for they're generally bound to marry then, even if they were only half in earnest before. So I let Mr. Tewky call as often as he pleased, though I endeavored to make him look as ridiculous as possible in Annie's eyes, whenever I had an opportunity. But I didn't succeed in a single instance. Love is blind, they say, and I believe it. At last, however, my patience was exhausted. I couldn't bear the sight of the fellow any longer, and so, one evening I asked Annie if she intended to marry him. She said she should wait until she was asked.

"Well," said I, 'you can choose your own husband, Annie; but if you marry that Tewky, you will do so without my consent. I shall do nothing to hinder you, though. Marry him, if you will, and repent of it after!'

"Well, sir, since that night Mr. Angustus Tewky hasn't been to my house."

"Then she has discarded him, of course," I cried, quite elated.

"I don't know. I'm fearful. Annie has been so quiet since that conversation I had with her, that I begin to doubt. 'Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep,' you know."

Mr. Couthony paused for a moment. Then he looked up rather shyly.

"Doctor, I don't know what you'll think of me, but I wish you'd propose. Then we shall know the worst. If she don't accept you, then she loves Tewky."

"I'll propose to-night," I cried.

"Good! I wish you success. Good-morning." And without another word Mr. Couthony arose and left the room.

"Well, this is rather out of the ordinary course of things," I remarked, confidentially, to the doctor. "In my wildest imaginings I never dreamed of anything quite so rich as this; to have a wealthy old gentleman ask me to propose matrimony to his daughter. But I have no doubt of the result. She loves me, I'm, sure. I've read *that* in her eyes."

That evening I called at Mr. Couthony's and found Annie alone, and seating myself beside her on the sofa, without any unnecessary preamble, I poured forth my love, and concluded by asking her to become my wife at her earliest possible convenience.

"Why, doctor," she began, while her eyes glowed like stars, and a deep blush suffused her face. "Why, doctor, I wasn't prepared for this."

"Call me Harry," I murmured.

"Harry"—and she raised her glorious eyes to my face.

"You do love me, darling?"

She bowed her beautiful head upon my breast.

I was answered. I was happy. I was too happy, perhaps. I felt as though I must go out somewhere in the woods and shout for very joy. I kissed her ten thousand times (now *don't* ask me to take anything off that statement), and then, tearing myself away from my love, I rushed out into the starry night.

I met the dear old gentleman (I wonder I didn't kiss him then) at the gate.

"Doctor! doctor! what answer?"

I grasped his hand, while the tears stood in my eyes, and then I said:

"My heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie."

"She is yours?"

"She is mine!"

"Thank Heaven! I'm satisfied. God bless you, my boy!" cried the old gentleman, turning away and rushing down the street.

I went home in a state of blissful bewilderment, and dreamed all night of millions of flashing black eyes, with rosy lips to correspond.

When I went down to the office next morning I found a letter from my Aunt Semantha. The dear old lady was inclined to believe that she was on her deathbed, and desired me to hasten to her side at once. So I wrote a brief note to Annie, and hastened.

When I reached my Aunt Semantha's bedside (as she lived in Brompton, it took me three days to reach it), I found that she

had left it, and was going about the house as lively as ever.

She thanked me for coming, and then I thanked her for writing to me to come, and then I bade her good-by, and hastened back, on the wings of love, to Verona.

As I stepped on to the platform at the Verona station I met Mr. Couthony. He was pale, and his hair was in his eyes, and his hat was pushed on one side.

"*She's gone!*" he gasped, grasping my arm.

"Gone! Who? Where?" I cried.

"Annie."

"What! with him? With Augustus? With Tewky?"

"No. He went one way, and she another. But they'll meet. Stop 'em! Find her! O doctor! can't you?"

"I will," I cried.

That satisfied the old gentleman, and he turned away. But at that moment Splatts rushed up to me.

"Ah, Harry, you've heard the news?"

"Yes. I'm going after her."

"Then I can help you. She went away disguised as a young man."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes. There were several here at the station that saw and recognized her, though she had stained her face a dark olive tint. But you'll know her. She took the last train up last night. If you are smart, you'll be able to find her before Tewky can effect a meeting with her. Good-by. There goes the bell."

I pressed his hand, jumped back on to the train that I had just quitted, and was soon flying away after my false love.

When we reached W—, I left the cars for the purpose of making inquiries about my lost love. The station master there is an acquaintance of mine, and to him I described the person I was in search of.

"Young fellow, not over sixteen or seventeen, dark eyes, dark hair, olive complexion, medium height, dressed in dark clothing?" inquired Jencks.

"Yes, you've—"

"Had very handsome eyes, did he? Was dressed rather foppishly, and looked infernally like a woman in disguise?"

"The very same."

"Then I *did* see him. Yes, I sold him a ticket to—where? O, Boston. I took particular notice of the fellow. What has he done?"

"Nothing, as yet, but he may. What time does the next train leave for Boston?"

"In ten minutes. *Was* he a woman?"

"Yes. Give me a ticket for Boston."

I paid for my ticket, and then stepping into the telegraph office, I sent a despatch to Splatts, informing him that I was certainly on her track, and hoped to find her now in a very few hours.

Then I got on board the train, and stepping into the smoking-car, solaced myself with my pipe, smoking fiercely all the way to Boston.

The moment the cars stopped I jumped down on the platform, and securing a hack, started off to visit the various hotels in search of my lost love.

I thought I knew the very house at which she would stop, and to that hotel I drove. Drubbs, the clerk, knows me. He held out his hand the moment I entered the office.

"Ah, doctor, how d'ye do?"

"Miserable. Pass the register."

"Going to stop with us to-night?" passing the book toward me.

"Perhaps. Let's see"—running my eyes down the page—"Couthony, room twenty-two."

"Know him?" inquired Drubbs.

"Yes." And I rushed up stairs to number twenty-two.

I paused at the door, hardly knowing what to do.

"Now I am to meet her," said I, "but what am I to say? Perhaps Tewky is with her—perhaps they are already married; but no—Drubbs asked if I knew *him*, Couthony. It must be Annie, and in male attire."

I knocked, and instantly the door was thrown open, and *she* stood before me.

"O Annie, my darling!" I cried, springing into the room and clasping her to my heart.

I forgot all about Tewky then, all about her running away from me, everything save the fact that the dear girl was in my arms.

"O my darling! how could you?" I asked; but she didn't answer.

"She let her cheek repose on mine,
She let my arms around her twine;
One kiss was half allowed, and then—"

she snickered, and asked—in a voice that wasn't Annie's:

"Who the deuce do you think I am?"

I threw the owner of *that* voice from my arms, and staggering back, I cried in tones

indicative of the most heart-rending agony, "O heavens! are you not Annie Couthony?"

The young gentleman scratched his head, and smiling sweetly, answered thus:

"No, my dear sir, I don't believe I am—that is, if I know myself. But if you mean Annie Couthony of Verona, why, I am her brother, and my name is Sam. I believe Annie and I do look very much alike, only her complexion is much more delicate. But bless you, my dear, you might have known 'twan't Annie, because you see she never wears this style of coat and pantaloons. But, by the way, who are you?"

"I am Dr. Robinson, of Verona."

"Ha! ha! ha! So you're the man, eh? Tewky told me about you. Know Tewky? Dem good fellow! You see, I've been away to school ever since the governor moved out to Verona. I went home yesterday, for the first time. Hadn't been in the house half an hour when Annie sent me to Mr. Tewky's office with a note, and he told me all about you, and—"

"Where is he now?" I demanded, seizing the young jackanapes by the throat.

"O, keep cool, doc. How do you sup-

pose I know where he is? I went as far as W—— with Annie last night, and then I left her and came to Boston; but I guess by this time they have met, and are married."

I released Sam, and sank back into a chair with a groan.

"It's rather tough, aint it, doc, to have a girl go back on you that way?" said Sam, stroking his beardless face. "But what could you expect to do alongside of Tewky?"

I didn't answer. I couldn't. I had loved and lost, and if you, my dear reader, have ever been in the habit of loving and losing, you can imagine what my feelings were at the time a great deal better than I can describe them.

Bidding Master Sam Couthony an affectionate good-by, I left the room and the house, and that night I started for Brompton and my Aunt Semantha's, leaving a note in the post-office for Splatts to send my luggage after me, for I felt that I never could go back to Verona.

I never have been to Verona since, and whether Augustus Tewky and his wife are living together happily or not, I don't know; but they have my best wishes.

MY OLD GOLD THIMBLE.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

THESE it lay upon the table. Not one of your modern affairs, that a week's hard sewing would demolish. No, my thimble was of the old-fashioned red gold, with a band of ornamental work about it, in a lighter shade of the same metal, and with a steel top. No need to look horrified, my dear madam or miss. I vastly preferred it to yours—with its onyx or agate top—good for nothing but to look at. My thimble was an old and well-trying friend! Alas—that I should have to say it—my only friend! And now I must part with that, as I had parted one after another with all my friends both animate and inanimate.

I took it up from the table, and turned it over in my hand, letting the last rays of the setting sun strike upon its curious ornamental band. The thimble had originally been my great-grandmother's property, brought for her from some foreign country by her husband. She had given it to my grandmother—her eldest daughter—who in her turn would have given it to my mother, but my mother died when I was a little baby, and so grandma kept it for me.

"Take good care of it, child," she said, when her failing sight warned her that she should not use it much more. "It has always carried good fortune with it, and I trust it will continue to do so."

But grandma's kind wish had scarcely been fulfilled. Not long after this she died, leaving me quite alone in the world, for I had always lived with her. My father had died some years before, and I had no one belonging to me. Grandma's annuity died with her, and it did not look very likely that I could earn my living in that little village; so I mustered up all my courage, went to the nearest city, and taking a cheap but respectable room, began to look about for work. I could find nothing better than sewing for shops, but although the pay was small, my expenses were not heavy, and I got along pretty well, with occasional employment from rich ladies.

But after a while the city air and close confinement to my work began to tell upon my health. The hot summer days seemed to stifle me; and I grew weaker and weaker.

At last I broke down altogether, and lay for weeks between life and death. The woman of whom I rented my room had taken what care she could of me, I suppose. She was poor and had plenty to do besides waiting on a stranger.

When I grew strong enough to look about me, I found my room stripped of all the little things I had brought from home to make it comfortable; indeed there was nothing left, but the furniture which belonged to my landlady, and my thimble. Doubtless that would have gone also, but for the fact that it happened to be rolled up in the piece of work that I had sewed on last, and she had not found it.

She said my things brought but little, that she was obliged to sell them to buy my medicines, and she hinted very plainly that I owed her for several weeks board. God forgive me if I wronged her, but it did seem to me that the rings and brooch that dear grandma gave me, to say nothing of all my clothing, must have more than paid for what medicine I had used.

It was only this morning that I had found my thimble. It had dropped from the work I had taken up, wearily wondering if I could complete it. My landlady was in the room, and I noticed her look of surprise and disappointment as I picked it up.

"I'm a poor woman, but honest," she began presently, "and my rent is due to-day. So if you will pay me what you owe me, I shall be greatly obliged, miss."

"Cannot you wait a few days, Mrs. Hoxton?" I said, timidly. "You must know I have nothing to pay you with, till I can finish this work, and take it home."

"I beg your pardon, miss," she returned. "I thought that them as wore gold thimbles could pay their just debts. Perhaps, then, you wouldn't mind letting me have my room, so that I could be getting rent from somebody else for it;" and she flounced angrily out of the room, and down stairs, where I heard her telling her next neighbor and especial crony, that "that there girl up stairs would never be fit to do another stroke of work, and she couldn't wait for her rent forever."

Was I really so ill? My wasted hands that refused to hold the work, and laid so idly in my lap, seemed to confirm the statement. But I could not go out now to search for another room; I must have a few days to collect my thoughts and decide what I should do next. There was no one to whom I could turn for help. Perhaps, if Mrs. Hoxton were right in her opinion of my health, the best course for me would be to gain admission into the hospital, and end my sufferings there. But I shrank from the remembrance of the long curtainless rooms with rows of beds, each containing a sufferer, that I had once seen when I went to visit a poor woman whom grandma had known, and who had been injured and carried there. The careless glances of the doctors and nurses rose before me. How I longed for grandma's kind words and petting ways! The thought of her and my lost home was more than I could bear. I sank back on my bed, and actually cried myself to sleep.

When I awoke it was growing late in the afternoon. I dragged myself from the bed, and into the chair by the open window, and then I began to think that I must part with my thimble to keep Mrs. Hoxton quiet for a few days.

As I have said, I took it up and began to examine the curious band about it. What a host of recollections it brought back! Memories of my childish days, when I first remembered noticing it on grandma's finger; memories of the day when she gave it to me, of the curiosity with which my girl friends examined it—comparing it with theirs of modern make; and interwoven with the other memories, one sweeter than all, of a certain summer evening when I sat in grandma's vine-covered porch, with my precious thimble on my finger. I had been sewing till Mark Chesterman stopped at the gate, and asked me for a spray of roses; and then he had come up the steps, and sat on the topmost one, just at my feet, chatting away of this subject or that, till his glance fell on my thimble, then, as now, lighted up by the last rays of the sun, and as he begged to look at it, I had slipped it off and laid it in his hand. With what a serious face he had examined it—pretending to find our initials joined with a true lover's knot in the ornamental work! He kept it so long that I laughingly accused him of intending to purloin it, saying at last as I held out

my hand, "I know you mean to keep it altogether."

"Yes, I do! and this little hand also," he had answered, clasping my hand closely. And then he had told his love, and begged me to be his wife, and we had sat there till the stars peeped out one by one, and the moon rose full and glorious behind the hills.

He was going away on a long voyage the next day—he was a sailor—and that night he went into the house with me, and told grandma of his prospects: how after this voyage he hoped to be a captain himself, and in a position to take good care of a wife. And grandma had blessed us both, and Mark had gone away, bidding me goodbye for three years, but promising to write whenever he had an opportunity to send a letter; and from that day to this I had never heard from him. The vessel was wrecked, and but few of her passengers and crew survived, and we could gain no tidings of Mark. Doubtless he had, like so many others, found a watery grave! The news of the wreck came but a short time before grandma's death; all my sorrows—loss of lover, home and friends—seemed to come at one blow.

But it would never do for me to sit and think of these things. I must go and part with the last reminder of them before my courage failed me; so hastily putting on the old hat and shawl, which were all that Mrs. Hoxton had left me of my plain but neat stock of out-of-door apparel, I ventured forth for the first time in many weeks into the streets. They were fast growing dark, the lamps were lighted in the shops, and everything looked bright and cheerful—a mockery to my sad feelings.

My first thought had been to go to a pawnbroker's; but at every step my dread of entering such a place grew greater, till at last I was really turning back, saying to myself that I must wait until the morrow, when I caught sight of a sign over a jeweller's door.

I remembered the name. It was that of a gentleman for whose wife I had sometimes done some sewing. I had met him occasionally when I went to the house, and he had always spoken politely—which was more than I could say for the husbands of some of the ladies for whom I had worked.

A new thought came into my mind. I would go in, and ask the jeweller to advance me the worth of my thimble for a

few days, and if I did not then call and redeem it, he might consider that I had concluded to part with it.

I hastened in, lest I should falter in my resolution again. Fortunately, the shop was empty, or nearly so, and the proprietor stood at leisure, near the door. He did not at first seem to recognize me, but as I addressed him by name, he uttered a slight exclamation of surprise.

"Excuse me," he said, kindly, "but I fear you are ill. Can I be of any assistance to you?"

"Thank you," I stammered. "I am not ill—that is—I have been—and—" I stopped suddenly, feeling how useless it was to attempt the quiet speech I had intended; and fumbling in my pocket, desperately produced my thimble, and murmuring something incoherently about needing some money unexpectedly, and repaying it before many days, held it out to him in a stupefied sort of way, hardly knowing what I meant myself.

But he seemed to comprehend me after a moment, and said, quietly, "You would like an advance on this? Certainly. It is quite unique," he continued, examining it, "and quite valuable. How much did you wish for?"

I said something—"whatever it was worth," perhaps—and added some sort of an inquiry as to how long he would keep it for me.

"O, as long as you like. Don't hurry yourself about it," he answered, with so compassionate a tone that I nearly broke down in my efforts at self-control.

"By the by," he said, as he handed me a much larger sum than I had expected—probably much more than the thimble was ever worth—"my wife is very much in need of some one to sew for her; and if you could spare time to call, would be very glad to see you about some work."

I murmured my thanks as well as I could, fully conscious that it was a kindly fiction on his part, and promised to call the next morning; then hurriedly left the shop, and turned towards my boarding-place. But now that the excitement was over, and my thimble really gone, I was so weak that I could hardly drag myself along.

Almost fainting, I finally reached my room, and dropped down on the floor, too much exhausted to try to reach the bed or a chair. How long I laid there I did not

know. After becoming a little rested, I tried to comfort myself with the thought that I might sometime redeem my thimble, and that in the meantime I should have work from Mrs. Murray, the jeweller's wife. True, my pride whispered that her work was but a disguise for charity, as her husband's loan on my thimble had been; but I was too weak and friendless to pay much heed to such thoughts, and only felt thankful that I had the means of satisfying Mrs. Hoxton's demands for the present, and need not go forth from even this poor semblance of a home until I was a little stronger.

I had risen from the floor and lighted a lamp, intending to go down and pay Mrs. Hoxton, when there was a tap at my door.

Wondering who it could be, for Mrs. Hoxton usually omitted the ceremony of knocking, and I knew no one else, I hastened to open it.

A tall man stood before me, but the passage was so dark that I could not distinguish his features.

"Does Miss— O my darling, don't you know me?" he exclaimed, and caught me in his arms, almost before I could recognize his voice, or understand that it was Mark Chesterman who spoke.

Indeed, I was so bewildered that I never spoke a word, while he went on like a madman, telling me how he was taken off the wreck by a passing vessel, the only survivor of those whom the boats had left there; and how he had written again and again to me at my old home. How he had gone there on his arrival, and could only learn that I had gone to the city; and how he had been searching for me for several weeks, and had almost given up in despair, when happening to step into the store of Mr. Murray, who was a friend of his, he had noticed in his hand a peculiar thimble which the jeweller was just putting away in a drawer. He had recognized it in a moment, asked to see it, to know how Mr. Murray came by it, to know my address, which fortunately the jeweller remembered, and had rushed off, leaving his friend impressed with the idea that he had suddenly become insane.

All this and more he told me, before I could speak, or before Mrs. Hoxton came up stairs with her virtuous remarks about "such goings on," and "strange men stamping up her stairs," etc. Mark silenced her effectually, by requesting her to send

for a clergyman. I don't know whether she fancied I was dying, and desired to make a last confession, but if she did, she was speedily undeceived, as Mark further astonished her, by inviting her to remain as a witness of our marriage. .

That was the first intimation I had that he intended to be married; but he did, and moreover carried out his intention immediately upon the arrival of the clergyman; after which ceremony, he bestowed on me as a wedding gift my own gold thimble,

which he had snatched from Mr. Murray when he rushed out of his shop in search of me.

I made him go back and explain matters to the kind jeweller, but he wouldn't leave me, lest I should be spirited away; so he settled my accounts with Mrs. Hoxton, and took me with him, and I have never left him since.

So I think grandma's wish has been fulfilled, after all, and that the gold thimble has indeed brought me good fortune.

MY REBEL AND I.

Nelson, Emma N

Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Jun 1877; 45, 6; American Periodicals

pg. 537

MY REBEL AND I.

BY EMMA N. NELSON.

I WAS sixteen, and an orphan, when the white-winged messenger, Peace, spoke to the troubled waters of the nation. My mother died in giving me birth, and my father received injuries in a railroad accident that caused his death before I was old enough to remember him. I have been told that my parents were greatly attached to each other; that they were earnest Christians and stanch abolitionists.

My father was a physician, practising medicine in a quiet country village nestled in one of the most beautiful valleys ever made by grand everlasting hills. Before his death he gave his property, which was not very large, to his only brother, Thomas Lattimer, who resided in the same beautiful valley, just out of the village, on the old homestead, with a request that he

would be a father to his little orphan Ruth. Of this home I have the most pleasing recollections, and thither do the soft silvery chimes of memory's bells oftenest call me. So kind to me were this uncle and his good wife that I never realized what it was to be an orphan.

My uncle had three children: a son several years my senior, a daughter near my own age, and a son three years younger. Such a happy peaceful home as ours was! Would earth were full of them! Uncle and aunt never allowed trials and misfortunes, and they had their share of them, to break the sweet harmony of their home life.

Cousin Grace and I conceived a strong attachment for each other from the first, and were constant companions. We attended the same school, and sat on the

same rude bench in the old red school-house. Together we braved the fierce cold and snows of winter, sought for the early spring flowers, and appreciated and enjoyed the long bright summer days.

At the time of which I write we had already been a year at the academy in Groton, and were enjoying our first summer vacation at home. My cousin was a perfect blonde, gentle and loving, with one of the sweetest dispositions ever given to mortals. I had great black eyes, an abundance of raven ringlets, a dark complexion, and a proud fiery nature. Neither of us was a great beauty, but each had a fair share of good looks and common sense, and with these we managed to extract much of the sweetness from the beautiful flowers springing up in our pathway. I have often wondered how two natures so totally different lived together in such sweet accord. It was not because my cousin's gentler nature yielded to my stronger one, for, when she differed with me, in her quiet way she was as firm as a rock. There seemed to be a tacit agreement that nothing should ever break the strong bond of friendship which bound us together.

The summer days were passing rapidly away, when one morning as we were seated at breakfast, Nancy, the maid of all work, handed me a letter, and, excusing myself, I was soon lost in its contents. It proved to be from a classmate, and informed me that our preceptress, a lady of high culture and refinement, had resigned and was going South to teach the freedmen; also that two or three of our school-fellows were going.

Now it had been one of the cherished dreams of my childhood to sometime go South as a teacher, and it seemed to me that the way had unexpectedly opened. Impulsively I threw down the letter and cried out, "Uncle, please let me go too?"

"Go where?" came from all sides of the table.

Then I made them acquainted with the contents of my letter, and whither I wished to go. When I had finished Gracie looked up and said, "Father, I should like to go too."

A shade of sadness swept over uncle's face as he replied, "I thought I had sacrificed enough for my country, but if you really wish to go with a motive to do good, I shall not withhold my consent."

We all knew he was thinking of the brave

young captain, his firstborn, who fell nobly fighting in the second year of the war.

"But," added uncle, after a short pause, "as I hold that those just beginning to toil in the schools—no matter how ignorant and depraved they may be—need teachers of the most thorough education and training, I cannot consent that you go until you have finished your course at school."

I was a little disappointed at this delay, but felt that uncle was right, and that there would be as great need for teachers three years hence as now. So it came to pass that we went back to school, where we labored faithfully until one quiet June evening we found ourselves receiving our diplomas and the congratulations of friends.

In the meantime my gentle cousin had won the affections of a gifted young minister, who persuaded her that he and his people needed her more than did the freedmen of the South, and she had consented to become his wife in a few months.

I was still bent upon carrying out my long-cherished plan of going South as a teacher. The papers were thrilling with Ku-Klux horrors and the unsettled state of affairs at the South, so that my good uncle and aunt had many misgivings about my going. Nevertheless, uncle wrote to Colonel Winthrop—an old friend of his and my father's, who had bought a large plantation, and settled on it, near Columbia, S. C.—asking him if he thought it would be safe for me to come South and engage in teaching the freedmen.

In due time a reply came, saying that I would run no great risk in coming now; in short that he needed my assistance to carry out a pet plan of his own. The good colonel then went on to say that near his plantation was a settlement of poor whites, more ignorant and in a worse condition than the freedmen; and since so much was being done for the latter class, he had resolved to turn his attention to the former. He had already built a schoolhouse, and was only waiting for a teacher, in order to begin his labor of love; and if I would come and take charge of the school, and live with them, I would add much to their happiness, and no doubt make his plan a success.

Colonel W. was a retired merchant, and fully able to carry on a school of this kind without pecuniary assistance. Accordingly, when I read his invitation, accompanied by the offer of a liberal salary, I resolved to

go. It was therefore arranged that my cousin should be married early in October, and accompany me as far as Richmond on her bridal tour.

These arrangements being fully carried out, one lovely autumn morn I found myself tearfully bidding the young bride and her husband a sad farewell, ere I started on my journey southward. Nothing of interest transpired during the remainder of my journey, which terminated on Saturday morn ng.

I expected to see the colonel's genial face among the crowd gathered to see the train come in, as he had written that he would meet me in Columbia. I was disappointed, however, and concluded that he had been detained in some unexpected way, and would soon make his appearance. Becoming tired of waiting, I thought I would venture out and take a look at this sad city. I told the clerk to tell Colonel W., if he came before I returned, that I had gone for a short walk and would soon be back.

The day was one of unsurpassed loveliness, and I wandered on in a dreamy sort of way, admiring the broken columns and magnificent ruins, that told so plainly how beautiful the city must have been before the fire swept over it. There were beautiful magnolias and other evergreens abounding in the yards of lovely residences, and the most beautiful streets had three rows of trees, one in the centre, and one on either side. There was a delicious balmy softness in the air; there were glimpses of a long bright summer, where the snows of winter tarry not, and the Ice King ruleth never.

But suddenly, while my enjoyment was at its height, I heard a strange voice say, "Lady, take care!"

I instantly turned and beheld a large creature, driven by two full-grown boys, coming rapidly toward me. Each had hold of a rope fastened to the creature's head, and they were doing their best to keep him within bounds. But, maddened by the ropes, the goading of the boys and the heat, the infuriated beast was ready to tear in pieces whatever came in his way. One glance sufficed to show me this, and that the beast had caught sight of me, and was ready to cool his angry blood by demolishing me. I hastily turned to seek refuge in the nearest gate, when another voice cried out, "There's a dog in there!"

However, I tried the gate, which to my

dismay I found locked. Not knowing what else to do, I turned to face my foe, now so near that I could almost touch his bent angry head, when suddenly I felt myself lifted from my feet and carried through the gate. My deliverance was so unexpected that I should hardly have been surprised to see some supernatural being standing by my side; but instead I beheld a tall fine-looking man, with long flowing sandy beard; hair of the same objectionable hue; large blue eyes — in whose tender light shone the man's true nature, in spite of his fiery locks; a broad white brow, and a voice of peculiar richness of tone, as I discovered when he asked me if I would go into the house and have a glass of wine, adding, however, that he believed that ladies preferred a cup of tea to anything else in great emergencies.

I thanked him for his kind hospitality, but declined to accept it, as I drank neither tea nor wine.

By this time the morning was far advanced, and, being anxious to return to the depot, I turned to my unknown friend and expressed to him the lifelong obligation under which he had placed me, and added that if he would show me out of his grounds, I would trouble him no further.

He started at once, saying, with true gallantry, that it had afforded him great pleasure to be of service to me; that he was reading on the veranda when he heard the lad admonish me to beware, and seeing the danger, had come to the rescue at a most opportune time. He then opened the gate and bowed me out after the manner of a true cavalier.

I hurriedly retraced my steps to the depot, where I found Colonel Winthrop much excited over my long absence; and not until we were safe in the good man's carriage did I tell him of my strange adventure. He looked very grave until I began to describe the man who had so suddenly snatched me, not from the horns of a dilemma, but from those of a bull; then I saw a merry twinkle in his eye as he asked if the gentleman had red hair, and if the house were white, with pillars in front.

I assured him the house answered to his description, but the gentleman's hair was not red, but a beautiful auburn.

"Humph! you," said he, "with your radical ideas and training, and unsparing dislike of Southerners, getting cross because I happen to assert that one of them has red

hair. Why, you innocent little puss, that man is Professor Arlington, as stanch a rebel as South Carolina affords."

Somehow I felt disappointed at this intelligence, for in my fright I had no time to think whether this stranger were a loyal or disloyal Southerner; for a Southerner I concluded he was from his speech and bearing.

"Well!" said I, "at all events he is a true type of Southern chivalry; but I suppose if he had known I was a Yankee schoolma'am, he would have let the angry animal kill me."

"No indeed!" said the colonel; "he is too noble a man for that."

"Ah," said I, "you defend him like an old friend."

"We are stanch friends," said he. "Our acquaintance began when he was our prisoner of war, and a braver, truer man I have never met."

By this time we had reached the Congaree River, over which we were ferried in a rope ferry, the bridge having been burned, I was told, to hinder Sherman's march to the sea. We were now in the country, and to my eyes everything looked new, wild and strange. There was much woodland, and many bridle paths. We would ride a long way without meeting teams or anybody but a solitary horseman, or a colored person with a bundle of "light 'ud" on his head.

I enjoyed the ride immensely, and therefore was surprised when the colonel turned and welcomed me to his home. Mrs. Winthrop ran down the carriage-way to meet me, and greeted me so cordially that tears came unbidden to my eyes. She was a sweet old lady, with an abundance of gray hair combed smoothly away from a wide low brow, underneath which a pair of mild gray eyes gave you a glimpse of the true woman's heart within.

They during an epidemic had lost seven lovely children, and I never saw sweeter submission to, or stronger faith in Him "who doeth all things well," than was daily evinced in their walk and conversation.

Colonel Winthrop's home was on the bank of the Congaree, and was just my ideal of a country residence south. There were long windows and wide verandas; high rooms and plenty of sunlight. No grand old trees stood so near the house that their great branches covered with foliage

made the house shadowy, damp and sickly. Trees there were, and shrubs; vines, sloping lawns and flowers; but everything was arranged with a view to health and enjoyment. The beauty of the place was due in a great measure to the taste of the gentleman who had formerly owned the plantation, though the colonel had made a few changes.

Once having safely reached my destination, I was anxious to begin my work. I therefore signified my willingness to open the school the next week. The colonel wished me to have a week or two to myself, in order to get rested, but my journey had not been in the least fatiguing, and I was young and enthusiastic. Due notice therefore having been given that the school would open, on Monday morning I repaired to my little schoolhouse—also situated on the bank of the Congaree—with a light heart.

This little house with its belfry, desks and school apparatus, was really a pocket edition of a town schoolhouse. Eagerly I opened the door, but at the first glimpse of my pupils I started back aghast. Had some lone graveyard given up its dead to furnish me a school? I had read and heard of clay-eaters, but my imagination had never pictured anything like the little creatures now before me.

There they sat with corpse-like complexions, dull expressionless eyes, half-open mouths and bloated bodies. I ventured to speak to them, and undertook to give them a lesson; but I very soon discovered that, if I were going to accomplish anything, I must turn myself into a dietetic reformer, and in order to do this I would have to become acquainted with the parents and homes of these children.

Time would fail me to tell of the discouragements met in the beginning of my work; but by unwearied patience and kindness I got the parents to prohibit the use of snuff and clay among their children, so far as they were able, and by winning the love of the little ones entrusted to my care, and watching that they were not destitute of necessary food, in a few months I had the satisfaction of beholding a decided change in the physical and mental condition of my pupils. Colonel W. and other friends of the school aided me immeasurably in the supply of food and clothing.

Thus the autumn and early winter—to

me, accustomed to deep snows and fierce cold, there had been no winter—wore rapidly away, when one morning the colonel turned to his wife and said, "Fred has come home; I saw him in town this morning. He sent kind remembrances to you, and said he should be out here in a few days. Now I warn you," turning to me, "little schoolma'am, not to lose your heart to my rebel friend."

"You seem to be very intimate with rebels," said I; "and I don't know as I shall be surprised if I hear you declaring in favor of the 'lost cause' some day in the future. As to losing my heart, allow me to inform you, sir, that when I get ready to enter the ranks matrimonial I shall not look among Southern chivalry for a companion to conduct me thither."

So saying I rose, made a mocking courtesy, and left the breakfast-room. Thence I proceeded to my little schoolroom, now a really delightful place in which to linger. My pupils, thanks to the new regimen, were beginning to look like genuine flesh and blood creatures, and were doing as well in their studies as I could wish or expect.

That afternoon, after an unusually pleasant day with my scholars, as I sat dreamily watching the tireless waters of the Congaree rushing over its rocky bed, and the white fleecy clouds leisurely moving across the clear blue sky, a desire came over me to go in search of wild flowers, of which there was now an abundance in field and wood. The great sun going rapidly to his red home in the west admonished me that I must start at once if I would be home before the night shadows fell. Therefore, without saying a word to any one, I caught up my hat, called Nero—our great shaggy Newfoundland dog—and was off for the woods where the yellow jessamine was blooming in great profusion.

I followed one of the bridle paths so frequent in Southern woods, and soon came out to the highway. There, right before me by the roadside, were some of the most beautiful jessamines, twining around a tall shrub that grew right behind the stump of a fallen tree. In an instant I decided to possess some of these beautiful flowers, and hastily mounting the stump, I was soon oblivious to everything, but my coveted possessions. I had gathered nearly all the flowers I wished, when I espied some perfectly beautiful ones, growing just beyond

my reach. I caught hold of the vine in order to bring them down within my reach, and in so doing bent down a treacherous blackberry bush, which was concealed by the entwining flowers, and it, as if to avenge the loss of its lovely, loving neighbors, laid hold of my veil, my hat and my hair, in that inextricable way known only to a brier bush.

While I was endeavoring to extricate myself from its thorny grasp, a low growl from Nero told me some one was approaching, and pausing in my fruitless efforts for freedom, I distinctly heard the clatter of hoofs coming down the road. I made one more frantic effort to be rid of my foe, but found that only time and patience could work my deliverance.

Since escape was impossible at present, I hoped by quieting Nero to remain unobserved; but imagine my dismay, when the solitary horseman appeared in view at a bend in the road, to see Nero spring up with a glad cry, and with recognition wagging from every part of his shaggy frame, bound forward to meet him riding leisurely along. I heard him speak kindly and call Nero's name, and still hoped that the dog would prevent his noticing me; but what should that villainous old Nero do when they drew near but run barking to me!

There I stood on a stump, with flowers strewn all about me, my hat and veil torn from my head, a part of my hair standing up, a part falling over my face, and the rest looped up by a relentless blackberry bush, wreathed with jessamines.

Talk about turning the colors of one's country! I not only turned red, white and blue, but most of the new neutral tints too.

Looking up in the midst of my confusion, I saw a pair of blue eyes regarding me so roughly that, forgetting dignity, and recognizing the ludicrousness of my position, I burst out in a merry laugh, and the stranger relieved himself in the same happy way.

Soon he found voice to say, "I think I can assist you, madam;" saying which he speedily dismounted, and was soon carefully loosening my dark locks from the grasp of the bush. I remarked that he had my permission to be as expeditious as possible, since the hair all grew from my scalp, and having had it pulled for the last ten or fifteen minutes, I was quite hardened to such treatment.

In due time I was set free, but left in

such a ridiculous plight that we again made the woods echo with laughter, much to the astonishment of dignified old Nero, who, however, condescended to wag his tail and look very innocent.

Before I had time to thank the stranger for his timely assistance, with true gallantry he mounted his horse, and as he touched his hat, said, "I hope the next time you take the stump for a flowery campaign, you may find fewer thorns in the field;" and then rode rapidly away.

I remembered distinctly where I had met him before, but I was at a loss to know whether he had recognized me or not. Slowly, with mingled feelings of amusement and vexation, I gathered up my flowers, descended from my high position, and started for home. I would have boxed old Nero's ears soundly, if he had not taken the precaution to run off with his old friend.

Arriving at the gate I saw that there was company in the house. The colonel's three years' residence had insured him many warm personal friends, among both Northern and Southern people. I opened the gate, when whom should I see sitting on the veranda but the gentleman who had seen me in that unlucky plight only so short a time before! Silently closing the gate, I stole around to the back way, and succeeded in entering the house unobserved.

Once in my room I resolved to leave it no more that night. Presently Perdita, Mrs. W.'s little maid, came up to my room saying that Mrs. Winthrop had sent her to see if I was in, and to ask me to come down to the parlor. I bade her say to Mrs. W. that I was too tired to come down, and that I wished to be excused from appearing at the tea-table. Good Mrs. W. came herself to see what was the matter, and I frankly told her I was not in the mood to meet strangers, especially a hero of the "lost cause." The kind lady kissed me tenderly, stroked my disordered hair, and said I should have my own way. Left alone I had a good cry, then ate a light supper, wrote a few letters, went to bed and slept soundly all through the long night.

The next morning "Richard was himself again," and hurrying down stairs before the breakfast-bell rang, I tripped gayly into the parlor in search of the colonel and his lady. I greeted the master of the house with a saucy bow, and turning to Mrs. Winthrop, impulsively threw my arms around her

neck, kissed her on either cheek, and was on the point of telling her what had so disturbed me the night before, when I heard the colonel say, "Miss Lattimer, mother and I are not the only persons in the world; allow me to present Professor Arlington, my friend, of whom you have often heard me speak."

I turned and met the calm gaze of the man I dreaded most to meet. Neither by word nor look from him would one have known that we had ever met before, but my self-possession was entirely gone, and I was conscious of having acquitted myself very badly during the ceremony of introduction. Fortunately the breakfast bell made conversation on my part unnecessary.

The professor took Mrs. Winthrop in to breakfast, and I was escorted by the colonel, who bantered me on my confusion, which of course failed to put me at my ease.

Our guest was seated at the right of the hostess, and as there were only four of us, was my vis-a-vis. The conversation was carried on chiefly by Mrs. Winthrop and the professor, and from that I learned that he had been very ill, and as soon as he was well enough to travel, had gone to spend a few months with his mother, who was a widow living in Petersburg, Va.

I decided, moreover, that this was the Fred of whom the colonel had spoken only the morning before, and against whose charms I was to stand immovable. To me the breakfast passed awkwardly and uncomfortably. Three times I had met this man, and each time the circumstances had conspired to show me at a disadvantage. I ate my breakfast in silence, and as soon as I could decently do so excused myself. I believed I had made an unfavorable impression, and there was no use to try and mend the matter.

The morning was one of those that drop so softly, sweetly beautiful from Southern skies, but I sought my schoolroom with a heavy heart. I fancied I was getting homesick and pining for old scenes and faces. Surely I had no need to feel lonely. I was not in the least isolated from society, but on the contrary had been kindly and politely received in this land of strangers, and had thoroughly enjoyed my first winter South.

I remembered how the teachers of the freedmen in Columbia had told me that they had no society outside of the "Home;" that Northern people ignored them quite as

much as Southern. I thought of all these things as I walked along the bank of the noisy river, while the birds twittered in the morning sunlight all about me, and I decided that too many bright things had come to me in this land of warmth and flowers, to let the consciousness that I had unfavorably impressed a stranger make me unhappy. So with a lighter heart I opened the door of my schoolhouse, and entered cheerfully upon the duties of the day.

The morning was far advanced, when, in response to a rap, one of my little boys opened the door, and ushered in Professor Arlington. He came to my desk with the easy and courteous manner of a gentleman, and I—well, my schoolhouse was my kingdom, and I was not easily disconcerted in it—consequently, I was able to receive him for the first time in a calm and dignified manner. After chatting a few moments I asked him to be seated, and then went on with my duties as though no one were present.

I only had one session with a short recess, and my school closed at two o'clock. The professor staid until the last pupil had left the room, and then rose and congratulated me on the flourishing condition of my school, adding that he did not know that he had ever so thoroughly enjoyed visiting a school before. He seemed to have expected to find pupils of another color and motion, and expressed himself as greatly astonished to find such children among the class known as "poor whites." From school matters we drifted into other topics, until presently I found myself sauntering leisurely by his side in the direction of home.

After that I saw him frequently, for he came often to the plantation, and I never thought of avoiding him any more than I did any visitor who came to the house. So it came to pass that we had many rides together, oftenest on horseback; through the wild strange country in South Carolina. I enjoyed these excursions immeasurably, and was as happy and gay as though there were no labor and sorrow in the world.

There were moonlight walks up and down the lawn, and along the banks of the Congaree, and this stanch Southerner and I, an equally stanch Northerner, had often warm discussions politically and otherwise. He had been nurtured in the hotbed of slavery, I, in the hotbed of abolitionism; yet we learned to respect each other's prejudices,

and got on famously together. As we rode through the wild beautiful South, where the gray moss hung in graceful festoons from splendid old trees, and flowers grew in rich profusion, I could not help admiring the beauty and desirableness of the climate.

"If," said I, "you were not so far behind the times your country would be a perfect Eden."

"Well," said he, "granting that we are a trifle slow. I think that we get more real pleasure out of living than you Yankees, who are so eager in the pursuit of wealth that you never have time to enjoy life until you are broken down in health, and consequently unable to enjoy anything."

I was strong in my denunciation of the Ku-Klux, and the treatment people from the North received when coming to live South. He looked at me sadly with his large blue eyes as he replied:

"You in your north-land know nothing of the desolations of war. You laid your loved ones and your money on the altar of your country, 'tis true—but we gave not only our loved ones and our means, but our country was invaded and our fields and homes laid waste. I would not excuse the Ku-Klux, but in a conquered country there are always lawless men whom war and defeat have demoralized and brutalized. I know it has been often said that the Ku-Klux have been upheld by the best class of people South, but this is false. No one deploras the existence of these lawless men more than I do, and I but speak the honest sentiments of many of my countrymen. As to Northern people living among us, I don't believe any nation or people would be overjoyed to have their conquerors settle among them. You will have to acknowledge that a large percentage of those coming to dwell among us are mere adventurers. They are attracted here by office, and perhaps the beauty of our climate; they care nothing for the negro only to secure their own political advancement. Men, who at home would never have been elected to the office of squire, come here and together with a lot of ignorant darkies, are elected to fill the highest offices in our land."

"Then," said I, "if you acknowledge your colored people are ignorant, why are you so averse to having them taught; and why are ladies of culture and refinement, who come here to do a noble work, treated like dogs? Some of them are wealthy and

self-supporting; some come from the lower walks of life; and some have not nobly fulfilled their mission; yet is that any reason why they should have been hooted at in the streets, rudely stared at by men lounging on the street corners, and spit upon by ladies under whose balconies they were passing?"

"None of our *true* ladies and gentlemen have ever treated strangers thus. Though they do not wish to recognize them socially, or even at all, they are above direct insult, and feel that he or she who risks his reputation for the sake of doing good gives the highest proof of moral heroism. We cannot feel towards the negro as you do. To us of this generation, and perhaps the next, they will be very much inferior to the white race."

I told him of my original intention to come South as a teacher of the freedmen, and he laughingly replied that he was glad I did not, though he did not doubt that if I had we should have been just as good friends as now, provided we had ever come to know each other.

Thus our conversation drifted from troubled waters into the smooth ocean of a summer's day; and thus the professor continued his visits at the farm, until I found myself eagerly looking forward to the coming of this rebel, in whose society I found real enjoyment. Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop had a way of excusing themselves and leaving us much together. Neither of us expressed any regret or concern at their conduct, which proves that we were satisfied with each other. Now too my rebel friend began to have a way of looking at me that caused my eyes to droop and sent the rich blood to dye my face crimson. Once, as he took my hand to bid me good-night, he retained it a moment, then giving me a look I shall never forget, drew me in o his arms, whispered, "You must know I love you, Miss Lattimer," kissed my lips and was gone. I do not know how long I stood just where he left me—not completely overcome at his sudden and unexpected declaration of love, but trying to analyze my own feelings—and I was forced to acknowledge that without the slightest intention of doing so I had given this man my heart.

A few days after this the officers of the Union army gave a May ball in the city. Colonel and Mrs. Winthrop, stanch Presbyterians though they were, consented to go for my sake. I was to wear a simple mus-

lin and a few wild flowers—no ribbons or jewelry. I was young; I loved to dance; my heart was light, and my simple costume exceedingly becoming. As our party entered the ballroom brilliant with light and flowers, Professor Arlington came eagerly forward to greet us. He was all politeness and attention; brought and presented to us the belle of Southern society, a Miss Davis, who was once such a hater of Yankees that it is reported she said she would like to wear a shawl dyed with Yankees' blood. She was a small sylphlike creature, very pretty, and richly and elegantly attired. Nevertheless she was very affable toward our party, so much so that it amounted almost to patronage.

The professor had brought her to the ball, and she had that irresistible way—to men—that all of those tiny creatures have, of getting close up to him and snapping her eyes up in her face; perhaps I was jealous, I don't know;—at any rate I had a delightful time until a young lieutenant, with whom I was chatting, called my attention to the graceful waltzing of a couple not far from us, who were Miss Davis and the professor.

"He is very much in love with her I suppose; at all events they are to be married in September," continued my loquacious companion.

For an instant the room seemed whirling around, then I recovered myself, and was greatly interested in the whole affair.

"Married in September?" questioned I.

"Yes, her brother told me all about it. She is very wealthy, and he is poor; they go abroad for a year or two."

If ever I was brilliant or fascinating it was during the remainder of that night spent at the party. I caught the professor regarding me with looks of wonder not unmixed with admiration, but I gave him no chance to come near me. Oh would this party never end? How thankful I was when I found myself in the carriage with Colonel and Mrs. Winthrop. I just wanted to lean back in the carriage and think, but they petted, praised and flattered me all the way home, and I was forced to be gay. How much of life is an outright lie, thought I. Once alone in my room, I threw myself into a chair and put a wet compress of tears on my aching heart. With relief came a feeling of indignation toward the man who I believed had deliberately sought my love with the intention of casting it back again

for no other reason than to conquer and humble a Yankee. Well, thought I, he shall learn that a Yankee's heart can bend without breaking. To be sure I was not a genuine Yankee, but to Southerners all people from the Northern States are Yankees.

The professor came regularly as before the ball, but I was always away doing missionary work among the poor whites, or too busy or tired to come down if I happened to be caught at home. Colonel and Mrs. Winthrop rallied me on my change of behaviour, but drew no confession from me.

Thus the month of May passed, and June, the last month of the school year came, and I was to go home for the long vacation. I was longing for the time to come, for I was not quite happy, and the heat was becoming excessive. In all this time I had not had a half hour alone with the professor, and did not mean to have ever again, for he would be married and gone when I returned in the fall, and that was the end of my romance.

One day as I was returning home after a long and dispiriting walk to visit a sick family, whom should I encounter in my lonely walk but Professor Arlington? I had resolved that no show of manner on my part should indicate any change of feeling toward him, so I greeted him as of old, and we chatted gayly on indifferent topics until we reached the colonel's grounds.

The professor paused before the gate, and turning to me said, "Miss Lattimer, will you not come with me to the rustic seat on the bank of the river? I want to have a talk with you."

Reading a refusal to grant his request in my face, he quickly added, "Give me but half an hour of your company, and I'll never make a similar request if you do not wish it."

I turned wearily towards the river and he followed. I sat down in the rustic seat while he stood before me and spoke as follows—"Did I so much offend you that night when I let my heart speak, that you have persistently avoided me ever since? or did you take that course to show me that the attachment was all on one side? or have I unwittingly offended you? if so, as your friend I have a right to an explanation."

"Offended me?" cried I—and I think if ever a pair of black eyes flashed, mine did then—"have you ever intended to do anything else but grieve and insult me? Have you not, for the sake of a personal spite to-

ward my countrymen, stooped to try and win a woman's love, for the pleasure of humbling and subduing her, and then calmly to toss back her love as a useless toy? I do not deny that I have liked you; I have found pleasure in your society, and the night you said you loved me was the happiest of my life. Take this knowledge and with it enrich your triumph; but do not think my heart will break, or that I will be accommodating enough to shuffle off this mortal coil, for even the sake of making your triumph complete. I expect to stay here and teach a great many years, while you and your bride are testing the sweets of domestic bliss. Your little game is played, and I congratulate you on your approaching marriage. You have chosen wisely; with Miss Davis you have youth, beauty and wealth, whereas if your attachment for me had been real you would have had to dispense with the beauty and money."

All this time he stood with folded arms, regarding me with a grieved astonished look, until I began to talk of bride and Miss Davis, and then I saw the troubled look leave his face, and a happy light steal into his blue eyes. When I had finished he simply said, "My brother is professor of Greek and Latin in Columbia College, and he is to marry Miss Davis in September, and go abroad for a year or two;"—then held out his arms and said "come."

My heart leaped to obey its master, and in an instant I was in his arms crying, sobbing, and begging him to forgive the cruel things I had said.

"My darling, I have nothing to forgive," said he; "I do not wonder that you thought I was a monster when you heard I was engaged to one woman, and knew I had been making love to another. By the way, who posted you so wrongly?"

"Why, Lieutenant Gleason at the ball told me that the brother of Miss Davis had told him that Professor Arlington and his sister were to be married in the fall, and he thought he meant you."

"Well," said he, "ours is an impoverished house; I have only my salary to live on; but my heart is full of love for you and I want you to be my wife. Do you love me well enough to share my altered fortunes?"

I let my heart speak and told him I did, and that I would do my best to make him happy. But talking under such circumstances is difficult, on account of "refresh-

ments" having to be taken so often. Suffice it to say, before we left the bank of the river it was arranged that he should come for me in the autumn, and that henceforth his "people should be my people, and his God my God."

Returning to the house we met Colonel and Mrs. Winthrop on the veranda, and I, coward that I was, ran up stairs and left Fred to make explanations. The good couple were delighted, having only one regret, which was for the school.

So it came to pass that I was led to the ranks matrimonial by one of the Southern chivalry, and can only excuse myself for saying one thing and doing another, by reminding my friends that all of us at some time in our lives find ourselves doing some-

thing we once declared we would not do. We have now been married six years. I love my Southern home, and have found warm friends among the Southern people.

Two beautiful boys, one five, the other three years of age, are the light of our home. Sprung from a union of North and South they will be taught to love their country and honor the dear old flag. My kind old uncle is dead. In his will I shared equally with his children, and when I demurred at this, aunt and the children would have it so—so I took the five thousand dollars falling to me and purchased a home, and here we will kindly take leave of you, informing you that the colonel's school is still flourishing, and fitting men and women from the lowest walks of life for great usefulness.

MY ROMANCE.

BY FLORENCE H. BIRNEY.

I was nineteen, and Fred was twenty-three, when we first met; and whatever we may be now, however practical we may have become with the flight of years, we were then full of romance. I had been an inveterate devourer of novels ever since I had learned my letters, and Fred was naturally of a romantic, morbid disposition. Our ideas of life and love had been chiefly derived from reading the sensational literature of the day.

It may therefore be imagined how lacerated were our feelings, and how greatly we magnified our woes, as we stood in the cool parlor of my father's large mansion that April day in the year 1868, and bade each other adieu.

"It is the last, last time," murmured Fred, in a broken voice, as he held my hand in his. "Oh! how can your father be so cruel as to thus sever forever two such loving hearts!"

"Why are parents always so stern?" I sobbed.

"Heaven only knows," replied Fred in a gloomy tone. "They seem to forget their own young days, and let their hearts harden and their best feelings wither and die for want of nourishment. Your father may have the satisfaction of knowing that he has wrecked cruelly two fond, trusting hearts."

"But he may think he knows best. It was quite kind in him to let us have this last meeting."

"But he took very good care to let us know that it was the last," responded Fred; while I felt in my inmost heart that we were doing the poor old gentleman some injustice. "If he had any youthful feelings still remaining in his breast, he would pity where he now condemns," he added.

I thought this a very elegant speech for Fred to make. It sounded as if it might have fallen from the lips of Lord Ernest Delarne, about whom I was then reading in the last blood-chilling novel I had drawn from the circulating-library. I imagined myself the Lady Leonora, listening to the

wild ravings of despair from her high-born lover.

There was a long pause. I was abandoning myself to my romantic dreams, and Fred seemed to be buried in a deep reverie.

At last the silence was broken by a long sigh from my lover.

"Why do you sigh?" I asked, trying to throw into my upraised eyes the expression of despair and melancholy which had lain in Lady Leonora's as she had raised them to those of the Earl.

"You ask me that, Bella," said Fred gloomily, "when we are about to be separated by a cruel decree! Ah! little did we think two short months ago, when we met in sunny Chichester, that we met but to love and part, perhaps forever, leaving in each breast bitter memories of bygone days. O Bella, if you loved me truly you would fly with me to that little farm in Buckland County, and spend the rest of your days in obscurity and toil, but blest with the assurance of a devoted love. But no spirit such as animated the hearts of the maidens of old dwells in your breast. You do not dare disobey your father, who by his stern decree blasts two young lives."

"But he may relent," I said, wondering how my father could have listened to Fred's eloquence, and been unmoved by it.

"He never will," replied my lover solemnly. "But, Bella, I want you to make one vow. If this life ever becomes intolerable to you, if you ever long for the protection afforded by my faithful heart, if you are ever goaded to desperation by a father's endeavors to force you to marry some wealthy suitor, come to me. In the little farm-house which my grandfather has so providentially left to me, we will be happy, far from the strife of the shallow world. You shall twine vines over the front piazza, plant roses in the yard, hang birds in the windows, and keep the house like a fairy's bower."

"O Fred, if I could only go now," I sighed, charmed with the picture drawn by my mind's eye. Surely the Earl never had

pleaded more eloquently to Lady Leonora, when her heart was already in the keeping of Lord Ernest Delarne!

"Make me the solemn promise to come to me, Bella, if circumstances should ever force you to the step," pleaded my lover.

"I promise," I said, "but, Fred, if another — perhaps fairer maiden — if you should learn to love" — I faltered, I stammered.

"Bella, do not insult me by doubting my affection. My heart can never change. My love for you will stand the test of years. No other shall ever take your place. My love can never die or alter."

"I will be true to you, Fred," I replied, gazing into his dark, dreamy eyes, and admiring the droop of his heavy mustache, "and, oh! when father hears of your steadiness and prosperity he will surely relent."

"He must relent," responded Fred.

"But a year seems a long time to test one, does n't it? Oh, I hope that long before that year is over you will come to my door like a weary bird seeking shelter from the storm. My arms and heart will ever be open to you, my own, my Bella!"

"Time's up," said a gruff voice, which I knew to be father's, and in the cool parlor he came, and I likened him to Nemesis.

"Oh, can it be five o'clock?" I cried, hoping my face looked full of despair and misery.

"Yes, one minute past," he replied, as gruffly as before. "I should think two hours were sufficient for you young simpletons to get through all the vows of eternal fidelity and other nonsense necessary to the solemn occasion."

"But it is our last, last meeting," I pleaded.

"I sincerely hope it is," rejoined father in a very fervent tone.

"Good-by, Bella," murmured Fred; and, unmindful of the contemptuous expression on father's face, he kissed me repeatedly. Poor Fred! he really felt this parting very deeply; for though we may have been, and I know were, foolish lovers, we were very fond ones.

I burst into tears, and threw my arms around his neck. I wished I might faint, and that my set, white face of unconscious anguish might move my stern father's heart to pity. In novels I had read, the girls always fainted, and then the stern parent, unable to endure the agonizing

sight, put the lily-white hand of the daughter into the manly one of her lover, and all was rapture; and she was married in white gros-grain silk, the front ruffle shirred a foot deep, the back was one mass of illusion puffs with sprays of wax orange-blossoms in the middle of each, a spray fastened to the head with one long spray of blossoms — and — and — Fred's voice interrupted the train of thought in which I had been indulging while hanging on his neck, bedewing his coat with my bitter, unavailing tears.

"Bella, farewell!" he whispered, "and do not forget your promise, my own love;" and he was gone, with only a cold bow to my stern progenitor, who was standing by the window with a very forbidding look on his face.

"Now, Bella," said the gruff voice, "that the affecting tableau is over, we will have a few plain words spoken in my usual plain manner. Let us have no more *fol-de-rol* about that Frenchified-looking chap with the black hair. You've been obedient about giving him up, and now here is twenty dollars; go get yourself a new muslin dress, and go to the ball with Captain Sprague next Friday night."

Parties! money! captain! when my heart was breaking. I scorned the rather tempting offer with a gesture indicative of despair, and murmuring brokenly something about my "ill-starred love," and my "unchanging fidelity," I rushed from the parlor, the laugh my father sent after me causing me to burst into tears.

I threw myself on the sofa in my own room, and for two minutes gave indulgence to tears, affliction, and despair. But in a quarter of an hour my love and agony were alike forgotten, for I fell sound asleep.

The supper-bell at seven o'clock rousing me from my slumber, I hastily changed my dress, smoothed my hair, and went down to the dining-room. Of course my parents and my brother Sam were already seated.

"Bella looks like 'Mariana in the Moated Grange,'" remarked Sam as I declined cold meat, and sipped my tea in bitter and gloomy silence. "Anything gone wrong with the Frenchy chap, Bella? or has Sprague forgotten to ask you to go to the ball on Friday? Speak up, sis."

I gave one haughty look at my brother, but made no reply. How dared he allude to Fred Villiers as a "Frenchy chap"! His

father had been a Frenchman, to be sure, but his mother was an American.

"You may look like the famous Mariana," went on that provoking Sam, "but you can't certainly say 'He cometh not,' for to my certain knowledge Jack Sprague comes up here every night in the week. I've always said he might as well board here, and feel settled." And Sam laughed loudly at his horrid joke.

"Bella will be all right in a day or two," said my father in a tone of conviction which maddened me. "She is a little blue about that Fred Villiers just now."

"I hope the prig got his walking ticket," said Sam, while I burned inwardly at their discussing my affairs so freely at the supper table. "I can't think why Bella ever fancied him. He's the fastest fellow I ever knew."

"He don't use slang," I cried hotly, "as some other people, who call themselves gentlemen, do."

"Keep yourself calm," rejoined Sam. "If there is one thing I admire above all else in a woman it is a lady-like repose."

"It is to be hoped that Mr. Villiers will settle down, now that he has that farm in Buckland County," said mother in her quiet tone.

"I never have much of an opinion of any one that has French blood in them," said father, "and from all I hear it is pretty certain that this Villier's mother danced on the stage in Paris."

"But she was an American," I cried.

"All the same," said Sam, "for she married a Frenchman. You are foolish, Bella, to give one thought to that idle, empty-headed Villiers, when you might marry Jack Sprague, who is worth ten of any foreigner ever born."

"Don't tease her, Sam," said father, in a reproving tone. "Of course she will be Mrs. Sprague before a year rolls over her head."

"Bella has too much sense to languish in despair over a black eyed, marbled-browed, raven-haired Frenchman," said Sam. My brother described the appearance of my loved and lost one in such a sarcastic tone that my blood boiled. Where was it I had read of the soul being consumed by an inward fire? I felt as if my soul was being consumed very rapidly.

"I shall never marry while my poor maligned Frederick lives," I cried. "We will

die unwedded if we must be doomed to a separation forever more." I tried to make my tone tragic, and I succeeded.

Sam whistled, and then said, —

"Oh, Fred Villiers will be married in three months' time. Men can't farm all alone. There has to be a woman around to see to things."

"Your sneers and jokes will only have the effect of making us more true to the solemn vows of eternal fidelity we have pledged," I said, as, with a haughty bow to my assembled family, I left the room, hoping my scorn had impressed them.

I spent the greater part of the night in reading of the woes of the Lady Leonora, her scorn of the Earl, and wild love for Lord Ernest Delarne. Indeed, so wrought up did my feelings become at poring over "The Estranged, or The Fatal Vow," that I could not go to sleep even after I had gone to bed at midnight. I imagined myself in the position of Leonora, urged and even commanded by her haughty parent to marry the Earl. I saw myself persecuted by my friends to marry Jack Sprague, and my despair was imagined vividly. I saw my wild flight to my faithful Fred, and our perfect happiness in the peaceful cot where I was to twine vines over the piazza, plant roses in the garden, and hang birds in golden cages at the front windows. Poor Fred! I pitied him sorely as I thought of the dull life he would lead on the little farm his grandfather had left him. But I knew he meant to honestly try to live a different life from that in which he had indulged since he had left college.

He was fond of horse-racing, betting, and a gay time generally. He was not dissipated, thank heaven! but he was fast, wild, idle, and, until he had met me, not ambitious to lead a different life.

I had met him when visiting a very intimate friend in Chichester; and, on my return to Barville, he had followed me, declared his love, and while we kept the precious secret to ourselves we were very happy. But then Fred asked father's consent to our union, and our happiness was at an end.

Father inquired into his character, saw he was idle, had no business, and apparently no desire to have one, and so he refused his consent to our marriage.

I was an only daughter, and perhaps father was to be excused for wishing me to marry well; but it was very hard for me to

give my dark-eyed lover up. The most father would say toward the future was that if we were still true to each other at the end of a year, and Fred was doing well in some respectable business, he would give his consent to our entering into an engagement.

So Fred had gone to his small farm in Buckland County, and said he would make it into a paradise for me, when I should be allowed to share it with him.

The next morning, when I went down to breakfast, I found a twenty-dollar bill under my plate. Of course father had put it there, and I thrust it in my pocket, my mind wavering slightly in regard to going to the ball.

"Here is a note from Captain Sprague," said mother. "He was here last evening; but I thought it best not to disturb you, and he left the note."

I opened it, admiring, as I did so, the firm, bold hand-writing on the envelope. It was an invitation to accompany him to the ball on Friday evening which the officers at the fort a mile away were to give in Barnville, having hired the town hall and a splendid band of music.

I felt refreshed by my night's rest. Fred was gone; why should I make a nun of myself? I need n't marry Captain Sprague just because I went to a ball with him. The end of my cogitations was that I told mother I had decided to go to the ball after all, and should get Miss Simpkins to help me with my dress.

The little dressmaker was only too glad to get something to do, and I made my preparations for "the event of the season," unmindful of the significant looks Sam gave me occasionally.

I went into father's study on the important evening in all my gorgeous array. He surveyed me very critically, but with a pleasant expression on his face.

"So you have concluded to go, Bella," he said. "Well, well, it shows you have some sense left, after all. Don't fret after that black-eyed dandy, but act as my daughter should. There! isn't that Captain Sprague in the hall?"

Yes, it was Captain Sprague; a tall, fine-looking man, with blue eyes and a blonde mustache. Everybody liked him that knew him, for he had such pleasant ways, and was so generous and frank. I might have learned to love him if my darling Fred's black eyes, raven locks, and romantic dis-

position, so like that of Lord Ernest, had not already completely bewitched me.

We set off for the ball, walking, for everybody walked to balls in sober old Barnville, and catching up with Sam, who had Jennie Gore with him. Jennie was a nice girl, with a laugh always ready. Sam used to say she was a "prime favorite."

As we walked on in the moonlight I forgot for a time the lonely, dark-eyed lover on the little farm in Buckland County.

I know I looked well that night, and perhaps my good looks, combined with the pleasure of the joyful occasion, were too much for Captain Sprague to withstand, for he made me an offer of his heart, sword, and fortune while we were promenading on the piazza during an intermission between the dances.

Of course I refused him, but gave no reason for doing so, except that I never could love him well enough to marry him. He pleaded in vain: I was firm, and at last he asked that he might come to the house as usual, and try to win my love by degrees.

I said he might come as often as he wished, but nothing would ever cause me to change my mind. The captain looked downcast, and was so distraught and gloomy going home that Sam suspected something was wrong.

The next morning at breakfast he taxed me suddenly with having rejected Captain Sprague the evening before. Of course I blushed crimson. I could feel the hot blood dyeing my face and neck. Hateful, tell-tale color! I could make no reply to Sam, but went on buttering my potatoes, putting salt on my bread, and molasses in my coffee, until a very naughty word from my father caused me to suspend my breakfast preparations indefinitely.

"Bella," very sternly, "have you actually rejected Jack Sprague?"

I murmured an almost unintelligible assent, and at once turned cold and wretched, my spirits sinking to zero.

"And for the sake of that idle, black-headed Frenchman, I suppose. The empty-headed spendthrift! Bella, I really supposed you had more common sense."

Mother looked unutterable things. Sam was wrathful, and father explosive. In dread of the impending storm which I saw would burst over my luckless head, I fled from the room, and in the solitude of my own chamber wept bitterly. Did they think,

then, that before a week had passed I could forget my adored Fred, and receive the vows of another man! I would show them the heroic spirit which dwelt in my breast.

But in spite of my resolutions to be a heroine like Lady Leonora, I found my days very wearisome and dull.

Captain Sprague left the fort near Barnville, being ordered somewhere else, and he left without even bidding me "good-by," which slight wounded me very deeply. Sam could not forgive my rejection of his best friend, and let me know on every occasion how low an opinion he had of my sense and discretion. As to father — well, he never spoke to me unless necessity obliged him to do so, and then only in the most frigid manner; while mother simply sighed and looked "grieved to the heart" whenever she noticed my irritation at being treated in this strange manner by my family.

The name of Captain Sprague was never mentioned in my home by any one, and I should as soon have expected to see a bomb-shell explode over the breakfast-table as to hear any allusion made to my poor Fred.

I grew to hate the horrid little town of Barnville, and never went on the street if I could help it. I felt as if every one knew how I had disgraced myself in the eyes of my family by rejecting the gallant captain, and clinging so persistently to poor Fred, whose romantic disposition had been commented on and laughed over far and wide.

Parties and picnics were given in Barnville, but no one asked me to attend them. I could not go, for lack of an escort, Sam never desiring to take me anywhere, and no one having come to take the place left vacant by Captain Sprague's departure.

I sometimes used to envy Jennie Gore when I saw her driving by in Sam's buggy, bound for a pleasant picnic ground, where there would be dancing and music all day long.

My life might be very interesting to read about in a three-volume novel, but in reality it was very dull. I never heard a word from or of Fred Villiers, and occasionally I caught myself wishing I had fallen in love with Jack Sprague instead, for then I would not be so neglected and wretched.

So five months went by, and it was the first of September when I received a summons in the early morning to an interview with my father in his study.

I went down-stairs with a beating heart: What new misery was I to be called upon to bear? What could my father wish to say to me?

"Bella," he began in the stern, uncompromising tone he had always used to me since my rejection of Jack Sprague, "I have here a letter which may prove of interest to you."

He balanced on two fingers a white missive as he spoke.

I made no reply, and my father proceeded, —

"Captain Sprague has done you the honor to propose a second time for your hand in marriage, though what he wants such a silly, romantic girl for is a mystery to me. He has addressed his letter to me, and I want your immediate decision."

I trembled, and felt my face grow pale, then a cold shiver passed all through me. I thought of how much hung on my first words, on this decision I was called upon to make at once. Captain Sprague's blue eyes, blonde hair, merry smile, and genial manner came up as a vision before me, and I almost said I would consent.

But there came the recollection of my dark-eyed Fred's vows of eternal constancy, and unchanging love and devotion. I saw how my marriage with another might drive him to ruin and despair. Lady Leonora's long martyrdom for love flitted through my mind. No: I was a heroine. No mercenary father should bend me to his haughty will; should drag me to the altar a pale, wild-eyed bride.

I looked up at my stern parent, and, in a voice which I tried to make as nearly as possible like that which I fancied Lady Leonora had used, I said, —

"Father, I will not be sacrificed on the altar. My heart is irrevocably wedded to the memory of my dark-eyed Fred. You may torture me; but love will keep me from perjury at the altar."

"Then be a little simpleton as long as you wish," my father exclaimed angrily. "My hope is, that Jack Sprague will never give you another chance to reject him."

I rose to leave the room; but my father detained me.

"You may pack up your things this afternoon, Bella," he said; "for I shall send you on the eight-o'clock train tomorrow morning to your Aunt Betsy's. She will cure you of all your romantic nonsense, I'll

engage. You 'll not find many novels in her library. Be sure you are ready; for you certainly shall go, if your clothes have to be sent after you."

My Aunt Betsy! My heart seemed to fall forty degrees below zero as I heard her name. She lived on a lonely little farm, four miles from any neighbor, and twelve miles from the nearest town. The household consisted of an old man and his wife, who attended to the work on the farm and in the house. There were not over a dozen books in the whole house, and those were of a religious character; and she took only a county paper and a monthly published by the Episcopal mission society.

Imagine my feelings at the thought of spending the winter in Aunt Betsy's dreary abode!

I was almost tempted to retract my refusal to marry the captain. But, no: that would be too humiliating.

O Fred! Fred! what was I not enduring for your sake?

All at once, like an inspiration, came the thought of my promise to my lover. Was not this the hour in which I should fly to him like a wearied bird seeking shelter? My mind was made up: I would go. In Fred's devoted love I should forget the months of anguish through which I had passed.

The train I must take would leave Barnville at one o'clock, and I knew it reached Sparks, the station nearest to Fred's farm, at six o'clock. I hastily packed up my jewelry and a few little fineries in my satchel, donned my best brown silk walking-suit, and at one o'clock took the train without having been seen by any one who knew me or could guess my purpose.

I left on the pincushion in my room a note for my father, telling him that unable to endure his cruelty longer I had flown to my adored Frederick. I signed myself "your heart-broken Bella."

I thought the contents of the note would wring the hearts of my parents, and for once I was right.

While on my journey I indulged in dreams of my meeting with Fred; how he would rejoice at my coming, our quiet marriage, the words of unaltered love which my idol would whisper in my ears.

I imagined the white cottage which I should make a bower of beauty, the vines which should be twined over the rustic

piazza. Indeed, so carried away was I by the pleasure of my own thoughts that the time seemed very short before the train stopped at Sparks.

I was amazed to see that the place consisted of only a telegraph office, a large warehouse, and a liquor and grocery store. A cross-looking man in the warehouse was the only human being in sight. Of him I timidly inquired as to the whereabouts of Fred's farm.

"Lives four miles up that road. Keep right straight along until you come to a white cottage with two elms in front of the gate. You can't miss it."

Four miles! But of course I could hire a vehicle. I made inquiry.

"No cart or horse in the place," said the man irritably. "You should 'ave told 'im to meet yer. Guess a stout gal like you kin walk it."

I turned away, and with a heart as heavy as lead in my bosom set out my dreary tramp. I wondered if Lady Leonora had ever taken such a walk on a lonely road, just before nightfall. The dust of the road soon covered my nice dress thickly, my shoes were a sight to behold. I saw only one house the whole way, and from that one a savage-looking dog ran out barking furiously, and so frightening me that I ran into some brush near by, tore my dress, lost my veil, and scratched my face and hands until they bled.

At last, at last, I saw in the distance a small white house with two elms mounting guard in front. But as I drew nearer I saw that the piazza was covered with running vines, late roses blooming in the front yard, and from hooks on the piazza hung two gilt bird-cages, the full-throated songsters swinging in their red rings from the top of the cage.

I knew Fred's aunt lived with him, but surely the old lady had never taken all this pains to beautify her nephew's domicile. No: my heart told me that Fred had done all this for my sake; that he had expected my coming at any day, and made his home beautiful for his wearied bird who was now coming to seek shelter.

The door was opened by a trim-looking maid-servant, who ushered me into a small but exquisitely arranged parlor.

I asked for Mr. Villiers, but she said he was not in yet, but would I see Mrs. Villiers?

I said I would, for I thought perhaps after all I had better see the old lady first and explain matters.

I glanced around the parlor, and saw it was profusely ornamented with tidies, wall-brackets, air castles, card receivers, and other articles which could only have been made by a feminine hand. How handy the old lady must be, I thought, to be able to make all this pretty fancy work.

In the mirror I had just caught a glimpse of my tried countenance, and dusty, forlorn appearance, when the door opened and a young lady entered. A young lady with big blue eyes and long yellow curls, and certainly not a day over eighteen years of age. Could this be Mrs. Villier's daughter?

"You wished to see me?" asked the soft voice of the little beauty.

"I wished to see Mrs. Villiers."

"I am Mrs. Villiers," was her reply.

"It was Mr. Villier's aunt I wished to see," I faltered.

"Oh, I am so sorry, but Fred's aunt has not been living here for three months past. Won't I do?"

"Are you his cousin?" I asked.

"Oh, no, no!" laughing merrily, and shaking her long yellow curls: "I am his wife."

"His wife!" I ejaculated in tones of horror and utter amazement.

"Yes. Are you his cousin Jane? He said Jane might be here any day this week to see us. You see we have been married only three months. I know we had known each other only two months; but Fred was so lonely, that mamma gave her consent, and we were married."

"I came to see Mrs. Villiers," I said, with remarkable presence of mind. "Since she is not here, I will take my leave."

"But you cannot go back tonight," cried Fred's wife. "Why, it is quite dark now, and eight o'clock too."

But I was unmindful of the darkness. I only felt as if I must get away before Fred came in; and I broke away from the doll who had taken my place, and set off down the road. I know she thought I was a mad woman.

So this was how the wearied bird sought shelter! Well, men were deceivers ever. Where were Fred's vows of eternal constancy? Where his pledge of unalterable love? Turned to ashes. While I was suf-

fering martyrdom for his sake, he had, after only two months of separation, married a pretty, yellow-haired girl! How different was he from Jack Sprague! How I had thrown away the pure gold, to cherish the dross! What would my family think of my escapade! How could I ever go back! But there was no place else where I could seek shelter. I felt as if I hated Fred for his faithlessness, and for being the means of getting me into such a plight.

In the darkness I trudged on, tired and sick at heart; and it was ten o'clock before I reached Sparks again.

There I found that the next train which passed Barnville would not leave Sparks until five o'clock in the morning.

What was I to do? Oh, how I regretted ever leaving my home! There was no place for me to stay except in the warehouse; and there I sat on a barrel, near by a lantern which the cross man brought to me, and waited for the train.

There was plenty of time, between ten o'clock and five, for me to review my whole life; and I did so at my leisure.

When, at eleven o'clock the next day, I reached Barnville, every particle of romance was gone from my brain, and I was more dead than alive.

The first person I saw, when I alighted from the train, was Captain Sprague; and the first thing I did was to fall over on the platform in a dead faint. Yes, I actually fainted at last; and Jack carried me into the ladies' waiting-room, and poured kisses and cold water alternately on my face.

When I returned to consciousness, I burst into tears, and Jack put his arms around me, and I sobbed until I was exhausted.

Father did not say an unkind word to me, and Sam made no cruel joke, when Jack brought me into the parlor. Mother sobbed, and then put me to bed.

I was quite ill for several days, having had, as every one will readily admit, a pretty severe experience in testing a lover's constancy.

Of course I told Jack everything when I was better; and, after the telling was over, he still expressed himself as willing to take me for better or worse. Father and mother were delighted, and there was joy throughout the family; but Sam occasionally winked significantly when farm-life or Buckland County was mentioned by any one.

I learned, after several months had pass-

ed, that Fred had been desperately in love with pretty Rosy Dexter from the hour he had met her, and had not rested until her mother had consented to their immediate marriage. I suppose he was ashamed to write me of his inconstancy, or hoped I had likewise forgotten.

Well, all's well that ends well. I can speak of Fred now without a pang at my

heart, and I burned my copy of "The Estranged, or The Fatal Vow," the very day of my return from Buckland County.

Three months after that memorable journey, I wore the white gros-grain silk I had dreamed of; and there was not a happier bride in the universe than I as Mrs. Jack Sprague. And then I had the felicity of sending my wedding cards to that Fred Villiers.

MY SECRET.

BY PETER MACINTYRE.

In the experience of the majority of men the golden sands of time slip through the hour-glass of life so gradually and lightly that their swift passage is scarcely perceived. Youth merges into middle age, and middle age gives place to senility; but no defining line marks the exact period of transition, and scarcely does a man become aware that he is no longer young ere he awakens to the consciousness that he is old.

With myself, however, the case was different. The roseate hues of hopeful youth did not, as is usual, melt imperceptibly into the soberer tints of manhood,—they faded suddenly, with a rude shock, and in a most unexpected manner. By one mad, unpremeditated action I was all at once transformed from a buoyant-hearted, careless-natured, though temporarily unhappy, boy, into a man with a scheming brain, and a heavy heart weighted with a horrible secret.

The iron entered into my soul on a certain summer afternoon when I had just attained the age of nineteen, and when, awakening, as it were, from a delirium of jealous passion, I found myself bending over the prostrate form of a youth some few years older than myself. A disfiguring wound upon the temple of the ashen-hued face before me riveted my gaze; and when, with an effort, I tore away my eyes, it was but to fix them, in turn, with sickening dismay, upon a sharp-pointed stone which I held in my grasp. At length, with a wild cry of agony and remorse, I threw myself upon the ground beside my dead friend,—beside the one being upon whom until within the past few weeks I had expended the whole warmth of an ardent and affectionate nature. Sydney West had been to me as Jonathan to David, as Damon to Pythias; and I had slain him! What words can express my horror as this conviction forced itself upon me? The crime I had committed had been as far as possible from my intention when, a few moments before, transported by a sudden ebullition of rage, I had seized the stone, and struck the fatal blow; and now, when I saw what I had done, I felt that my own life would be all too poor

a price to pay could I but redeem the action.

To hasten to the nearest magistrate, confess my deed, and deliver myself up to justice, was indeed my first powerful impulse. But I was young, and the love of life was strong within me. The instinct of self-preservation soon asserted itself, and ere long I was as feverishly anxious to escape the consequences of my guilt as I had been before to suffer for them.

An eager, searching glance, directed toward the only quarter whence the catastrophe might have been observed, showed me that discovery was not imminent. Before me lay an undulating landscape, fertile in foliage, and presenting rich stretches of pasture, on which grazed numerous sheep, and a few cattle, but where no human being was within sight. Behind and to the right and left of me rose low walls of rock surmounted by overhanging trees, thickly planted, and screening perfectly the small, natural alcove in which I stood. Built upon that higher ground, as I well knew, was a large, one-storied building, the sole habitation within a mile; but it stood at some hundreds of yards' distance, and I had little fear that my agonized cry could have reached the ears of its inmates.

Encouraged, therefore, by the belief that so far my terrible crime was known only to myself, I sprang from the kneeling posture I had until now retained, and, while my heart palpitated audibly with terror, commenced to drag my unfortunate victim behind the concealment of a few bushes which grew at the foot of the cliff to my rear. This purpose effected, I stood for an instant to take a last look at him whose companionship had for years been the chief happiness of my life, but the remembrance of whom must, I conceived, constitute henceforth its bitter curse and misery.

Ah! shall I ever forget that moment? Thirty years have passed since it occurred, yet the agony and horror of it are still as fresh in mind as though it had been but of yesterday. How cruel seemed the birds, as, in mockery of my misery, they sang their

lively carols in the trees overhead! How hateful and unfeeling were the bright sun's rays piercing the foliage, and mottling with light and shade those white, upturned features! And how fascinating in its unutterable loathsomeness was that huge spider which I observed to cease from its spinning in the bush above, and slowly to lower itself, with bloated body, and long, outstretched legs, toward the face of my friend! Ere it alighted, I turned and fled, and skirting a terrace of shelving ground soon reached a tree to which some hours before I had attached my horse. Vaulting upon the animal's back, I leaped a hedge, galloped across a couple of fields, and, without having encountered a single person, gained a lane which led from that Australian sheep-farm out on the high-road to Melbourne.

The same evening, my passage taken in an assumed name, I was the occupant of a cabin on board a sailing-vessel which was being slowly tugged out of the harbor of that flourishing town. The vessel was a large one, bound for England, and, in addition to a heavy freight of merchandize, it carried several passengers.

And now, leaving undescribed the anguish and torture of that never-to-be-forgotten night, as, with sleepless eyes and restless brain, I turned incessantly from side to side in my narrow berth, I will in a few brief sentences introduce myself more particularly, and explain the fortuitous circumstances which led to my being burdened with the awful secret already revealed.

At the age of four I was left an orphan under the guardianship of a rich uncle, to whom I was heir. My uncle was a book-worm, and as selfishly absorbed in his studies as any miser could be in the accumulation of wealth. His temper was eminently ungenial, and my memory furnishes no instance of even a momentary gleam of tenderness exhibited toward me by him. The sum of care which he seemed to have thought it necessary to bestow upon his orphaned charge was the providing him, in the first place, with a hard-featured, ill-dispositioned nurse, and afterward with a stern, undemonstrative governess. Such, therefore, having been the associates of my childish years, it is scarcely to be wondered at, that when, at the age of thirteen, I was sent to an expensive private school, I knew the meaning of the word "love" only in theory. In less than a fortnight, however,

from the time of my arrival there, an attachment, strong and passionate in proportion as its birth had been dilatory, had sprung up for a school-companion.

My senior by three years, Sydney West was a handsome, healthy boy, bold, clever, and energetic. In person as well as mind I was greatly his inferior; but his friendship afforded me protection and happiness, and I in return gloried in his physical and mental superiority without experiencing a single twinge of jealousy upon its account, or on account of the popularity he enjoyed. Not one serious quarrel did we have during the whole course of our common-school-life, and when Sydney was about to enter the academy for the college, I worked hard to prepare myself to enter Oxford at the same time. But our plans for doing so were frustrated by an unexpected misfortune.

Through the failure of several leading mercantile houses in Liverpool, Mr. West, Sydney's father, who was the owner of a large shipping warehouse in that town, was brought to the ground. His ruin was complete, and, instead of being sent to the University, and provided, as hitherto, with a liberal allowance of pocket-money, Sydney was informed that he must in future depend upon his own exertions for a livelihood. In a few weeks, accordingly, from the receipt of this disastrous news, young West was on his way to Australia, then regarded as the El Dorado of fortune-hunters, and I was disconsolate. It may perhaps seem an exaggeration of sentiment to say that a portion of my very life appeared to have been torn from me with the departure of my friend; but it is nevertheless true that I so mourned his absence, and pined for his companionship, that I presently fell into a delicate state of health.

Consumption was supposed to be hereditary in our family; and when, after a year at college, I returned home pallid and emaciated, a long sea-voyage was recommended by the medical practitioner who had been called in to attend me. With infinite delight I seized upon the suggestion, and having obtained from my uncle permission to visit Australia, my gratification almost effected a permanent cure. Extreme liberality in the matter of money allowance had always been my guardian's most pleasing idiosyncrasy, and it was with a supply of funds plentiful to extravagance, some good introductions to residents at Melbourne and

Sydney, and permission to remain on the continent, if I chose, a year, that I had but two months before landed in Australia. And now I was leaving it again; and under what circumstances! Like a fevered dream seemed the events of these two months, as I recalled them in sequence, lying with aching, horror-struck heart in my confined cabin.

How well I recollected the first joy of meeting my friend, and how soon it was overclouded by an intuitive perception, in spite of his warm welcome, that his heart was no longer so wholly mine as it had once been my happiness to believe! How well, too, I recollected the confirmation of my suspicions, when, on my first visit to Bushland Farm, I was introduced to Kathleen O'Hagan, only child and heiress of the rich Irish settler who had hired Sydney West, at a fabulous salary, to assist him in the business of sheep-breeding! Scarcely did it need that I should surprise his admiring glances, surreptitiously cast upon her, or note the tender respect of his address, in order to guess that Sydney was in love with his employer's daughter. For how could any one look unmoved upon that superb beauty? how gaze with indifference into those dark, lustrous eyes, or upon that lovely blue-black hair coiled round a head perfectly shaped, and poised above a figure every line and movement of which was grace itself? No, it was certainly no wonder that my friend should admire Kathleen O'Hagan: neither did it appear to me marvelous that he should love her when once I had heard that rippling, hearty laughter which imprinted a sunny dimple in the smooth, richly tinted cheek, and testified to a nature at once innocent, simple, and warm. As well blame a man for rejoicing in blue skies, bright flowers, and sun-lit landscapes as for feeling the charm of Katie's presence. Yet that I did blame Sydney West for feeling that charm is unquestionable; and it is also unquestionable that with each successive and almost daily repeated visit to the farm I felt more and more angry with him for manifesting such feeling.

My temper, under this constant provocation, became uneven and disagreeable, and my treatment of my friend strange and morose. Did he guess the cause? Did he see that an ugly demon of jealousy had taken possession of my heart? and that, under its influence, the perfections of his person, for-

merly my pride, had grown obnoxious to me? that his pleasant manners, agreeable voice, and fluency of speech had become as so many thorns in my side, each a separate injury and grievance done to myself? Did he guess that I too was in love with Kathleen O'Hagan? He did not appear to do so, neither did Katie herself seem to suspect it; perhaps because I gave little outward evidence of my sentiments, or perhaps because they were too much absorbed in a study of each other to note such evidences as did exist. Why, oh, why, seeing so clearly as I did where her preference lay, had I not the moral courage to deprive myself of Kathleen's society? to tear myself away from the source of temptation to those evil feelings which had become my tormentors?

What a fool, what a wretched, weak fool, did I now seem to myself, as I writhed in my berth on board the "Ocean Star," going over and over again in my mind, with torturing precision, every detail of that last disastrous interview with Sydney, recalling how, upon approaching the farm, — which lay at the distance of twelve miles from Melbourne, — I had caught sight of him in the lower fields of the estate, and had joined him there; how, by some sharp, discourteous words, I had led to a quarrel; how we had wandered into the secluded spot already described; and how I had then, on slight provocation, lost entire command of my passion, and, lifting a stone, had, with it in my hand, struck him with deadly violence upon the temple!

And now, alas! I was a fugitive from justice, seeking to escape the punishment of a crime committed without premeditation, and for which I would have given worlds to atone! I had taken a life almost as dear to me as my own. I had slain my one, my true, my most beloved friend. And now, to add to the poignancy of my sufferings, I knew that the cause of my ill-feeling toward him had been pitifully out of proportion to its awful result. With the death of my friend, all love for Kathleen O'Hagan had vanished as completely as morning mist vanishes at the approach of the sun. As though a curtain had been lifted from my eyes, I saw that the sentiments with which I had regarded her had been only those of boyish fancy, fed by a warm imagination, stimulated by example, and inflamed by jealousy. My love for Katie had been a passing sentiment: my love for Sydney was

a love true and enduring as life. And I had left him dead among the bushes! I had, with my own hand, cut short his young life just as it was opening before him bright with the signs of future prosperity, and blissful with reciprocated love.

The voyage of the "Ocean Star" from Melbourne to Liverpool occupied nearly four months; and as I look back at it now it seems as though the whole passage must have appeared to me like one prolonged nightmare. Striving to look and act like an ordinary person, I went about among my fellow-passengers, feeling all the time as though the brand of Cain were upon my brow, and as though, somehow or other, they could not fail to guess at my horrible secret. To my own mind that secret was ever present. Alone in my cabin, pacing the deck, conversing with those around me, or seated at meals, I saw always before my eyes that white face under the cliff, with the mottled light and shade upon it, and the huge spider in the act of descent. I had, moreover, constantly to endure the dread of pursuit and capture; and seldom in the day-time was my gaze diverted from the quarter whence danger on this score was to be apprehended. How I trembled and shuddered as from time to time a vessel would appear in our wake; and how oppressive was my terror when, as once or twice happened on the voyage, we were bespoken by such!

The most dreadful portion, however, of that most dreadful voyage was, without question, the three days when, in crossing the Tropic of Capricorn, we lay becalmed. The sufferings of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" were as nothing to mine when, like an unwieldy carcass, our great ship lay without power or motion upon those shining, rippleless, purgatorial waters. During those three days I neither ate nor slept; and as their slow hours dragged themselves away I felt that I must certainly go mad. As a matter of fact I did become ill, and it was more than a week after a tardy breeze had at length sprung up, which carried us across the calm belt, and we were again speeding northward, that the fever of brain and irritation of nerves from which I suffered subsided sufficiently to allow me to leave my cabin. When I re-appeared upon deck I probably looked, as I felt, very feeble and wretched; and it is from this time that I date the kind, indeed almost moth-

erly, attention which I received from a lady on board.

Mrs. Carleton was, as I learned from a fellow-passenger, a widow of but a few weeks' standing. Her husband had been a missionary clergyman, of good family, who had labored in an interior county in New South Wales, and whose death, it was reported, had left his wife and daughter very ill-provided for. The two were now returning to their native country, their fresh black drapery and grief-impressed countenances giving evidence of the recent bereavement. From the first these ladies had attracted general consideration and respect, and even I, notwithstanding my internal distractions, had not failed to observe them somewhat closely.

Neither were, strictly speaking, beautiful, but both possessed—the daughter in an eminent degree—a singular charm. Tall, and elegant of figure, Edith Carleton, at seventeen, with her calm, pale face, and clear hazel eyes, looked just the kind of girl to be rightly compared to a lily. Purity of mind and sweetness of disposition manifested themselves in each lineament of her face, and in every word she uttered; and when I gazed at her—as I sometimes did from a distance—I felt as though I were a fallen spirit regarding from the depths of woe an angel of light. Never of my own choice did I approach or address her: to have done so would have appeared to me a kind of sacrilege. But occasionally, when her mother was with me, she would come and stand by her side, joining in the conversation, and glancing at me from time to time with a pitying expression which deeply touched me, and which brought me for a brief interval a kind of temporary relief.

Nothing, however, could for long mitigate, in any sensible degree, my trouble, and as we neared the coast of England my dread of arrest increased. A vessel carrying news of the murder might very easily have preceded us in arrival, and I might, accordingly, be arrested upon landing. But, probable as this supposition appeared to my overwrought imagination, the event proved otherwise. No person bearing the slightest resemblance to a law-officer boarded our vessel from the tug which met us at the mouth of the Mersey; no inquiry was made for me either under my rightful name of Henry Carruthers, or under that I had assumed of Charles Matheson; no opposi-

tion was offered to my landing on the Liverpool floating-docks, nor did any obstacle present itself to my taking a cab, and having myself and my effects conveyed to the Lime-Street Station. Booking thence, I secured a ticket by the night-mail about to start for London, judging correctly that in no other city perhaps in the world could there be found greater facilities for hiding myself from the pursuit which my fears still painted as inevitable.

On reaching the capital my first step was to select carefully every article in my possession, of whatsoever description, on which my name had been inscribed, and to pack these, together with all my linen, in a port-manteau. This I caused to be labeled with a fictitious name, and despatched to an obscure Scottish village, with directions that it was to be left at the station till called for. My next proceeding was to wander for some weeks from hotel to hotel, from boarding-house to boarding-house, never for two consecutive nights sleeping beneath the same roof. Having thus, as I thought, taken what precautions I could to insure safety, I established myself in respectable lodgings, and began to look out for some method of supporting a life to which I still clung in spite of its apparent undesirableness.

On leaving Melbourne, I had drawn from its principal bank the whole sum of money which had been placed there to my credit; but though this was considerable when viewed merely as the provision for a year's travel and enjoyment, it could not be regarded as furnishing any safeguard against future want. As a matter of course, I had determined to hold no communication with my uncle, nor with any acquaintance in our native county of Durham. To all who had known me as Harry Carruthers I had ceased to exist; and this living death I looked upon as the just punishment of my crime.

Cut off, therefore, from all expectation of inheritance, I applied myself to the obtaining of some kind of situation, and in the exertion of mind and body thus entailed I found a little alleviation of my omnipresent misery. But without references or introduction of any kind I soon found how hopeless was the search for employment. Day after day, week after week, month after month, elapsed, and I had found no means of earning a penny. My purse was gradually emptying, and my landlady began to treat me to sour looks and uncomfortable

speeches, as time after time I deferred the settling of her account.

At length, when I had occupied her apartments some eighteen months, she informed me one morning, in no courteously selected language, that I must either "pay up," or leave her house that day. Assuming what dignity I could, I replied that I should do both; and, with little now remaining of my small store of money, I set off in the afternoon to look for more reasonable lodgings, and a more accommodating landlady.

It was, singular to relate, when on my way to a retired locality wherein I expected to find rooms at an economical rent that I met at length, when least anticipating it, with the employment I had so long been coveting. Turning, as I was about to pass it, on a sudden impulse, and with little hope of success, into a large warehouse where I had already twice met with a repulse, I left it with an engagement as corresponding-clerk, at a salary small to begin with, but which it was promised should be increased in proportion to my deserts.

For the first time since I had fled in terror from the Australian sheep-farm I experienced a moment's gratification. Time, though it had not worn out my remorse, or lessened my affection for my dead friend, had removed in a great measure my fear of apprehension as his murderer. My heart still ached over Sydney's untimely end, and my own consequent bereavement; but I had ceased to look askance at every person I met in the street, or to start and tremble at each knock upon the door of my lodging-house. That I should ever again enjoy actual happiness, I did not for a moment conceive; but that my guilt might now remain forever undetected I thought very possible. And in this belief I experienced a kind of apathetic satisfaction.

I even felt, as I have confessed, some faint emotions of pleasure on that day, when, eventually, I had secured to myself a means of livelihood; and it was with a step lighter than it had yet been since I entered the metropolis, that, quitting the house of Tyrands & Co., I proceeded on my way to Ascalon Street. Arrived there, I walked from one end to the other of the narrow cross-thoroughfare, scanning the shabby-genteel houses, each with a small garden in front of it, and many displaying in their windows cards with the announcement of "Apartments to let."

Selecting from among the latter one which bore, in its carefully tended garden-plot, spotless-white curtains, and flower-adorned windows, evidence of the cleanliness and taste of its inmates, I approached, and knocked. A tidy maid-servant opened the door, and in answer to my inquiry, "You have apartments to let?" showed me into a small front sitting-room, and retired to call her mistress.

Left alone, I took a survey of the chamber, noting that every article of furniture, from table and chairs to carpet and pictures, was of recent purchase, but that the discomfort of newness had been modified by taste in selection and arrangement; and I was just thinking that none but a lady could have chosen the colors of the drapery and carpet, when the door opened, and, turning to bow to a stranger, I recognized Mrs. Carleton.

It was with some confusion as well as surprise that I greeted my kind fellow-traveler, for upon parting with her in Liverpool I had, in answer to her request, promised to write to her at an address she had given me in the North, and I had not done so. This negligence of my promise had not, however, been the result of forgetfulness on my part, nor of ingratitude for the gentle, delicate attentions she had shown me during my illness on my dreadful voyage: on the contrary, the remembrance of Mrs. Carleton and her daughter had been treasured in my lonely, wretched heart with a constancy and devotion at which I had frequently wondered when considering how entirely their images were associated with that most painful period of my existence. I had not written to my kind friend simply because it had been my policy to cut loose all threads of connection with Australia and my past life; and it had been among my most acute miseries, both on the voyage, and after coming to London, to think that Edith and she might soon discover how unworthy I had been of their tender feminine solicitude.

And now, though embarrassed at the meeting, my pleasure at seeing Mrs. Carleton again was hearty and sincere; and perhaps it was because my feelings were so evident that I easily obtained acceptance of my very lame excuses for non-correspondence.

Peace on this score made, Mrs. Carleton informed me that upon consulting a relative — whom she had for this purpose visited on

coming to England — as to the best method of turning to account, for the support of Edith and herself, the small sum of money she possessed, she had been recommended to take an inexpensive house in London, and to let furnished apartments. Though every inch a lady, Mrs. Carleton made this acknowledgment of her situation without the slightest exhibition of false pride; and I felt, in consequence, quite at my ease while arranging to become her tenant at the very moderate rate she demanded.

On that evening I removed to No. 15 Ascalon Street, feeling — though without analyzing my impressions — that I was entering upon a new epoch of existence. And so it proved; for although on the first renewal of my acquaintance with Edith Carleton my former conception that there existed between us an immeasurable gulf — caused by her angelic purity, and my conscious guiltiness — took strong possession of me, intimacy in a measure modified these sentiments, and ere a month had elapsed I had fallen madly and incurably in love with her. Ah, what a love was that! How different from the counterfeit semblance of it enkindled in my fancy by Kathleen O'Hagan's beauty! This love, this entralling, mysterious passion, was strong as the mighty wind, pure as the blue heavens, lasting as the eternal ocean. It metamorphosed my whole existence. Its touch was more magical in its effects than an Egyptian's wand. I became a new being. The past, with its cares and anxieties, vanished; for I would not contemplate or believe in it. The present, the blissful present, and the future, with its ecstatic possibilities, were all I possessed.

I lived, as it were, in Paradise. I breathed rapture; for did not the same roof shelter myself and my beloved? I trod on air as I passed through the London streets on my way to business and back; for had I not just left her side? or was I not upon the point of returning to it? I did not ask myself whether I should dare, notwithstanding my stained character, to seek Edith's affection; or, if the question occurred to me, I put it away as a suggestion of the Evil One. Love, overwhelming love, had drowned brain, heart, and conscience in its delicious flood. Life without Edith's love would, I profoundly felt, be worse than death; and I must possess that love, or perish in the attempt to gain it.

I did gain it, and in the very midst of the rapturous delight I experienced in finding that Edith loved me—my sweet, innocent Edith—there awoke in my heart the old pain, which had been lulled for a time. The serpent's tooth, remorse, fixed itself again in my vitals, and began to gnaw; for, in giving an account of my parentage, early life, and so forth,—which, on receiving my proposal of marriage with her daughter, Mrs. Carleton naturally demanded,—I was compelled to use much deceit, hateful deceit; doubly hateful when addressed to pure, trustful natures like those of Edith and her mother. How I loathed and abhorred it! But deceive I must, and deceive to the end; and my innocent girl must be drawn into the mire: for even in marriage I must keep to my false name, and—hideous thought!—must give it to her.

Unutterably horrible, as I pondered it in bed on the evening of my engagement, seemed the burden of hypocrisy with which my impetuous passion and its dread consequences had weighted me, and which it was plain could never be shaken off again. I passed a sleepless night, but with the return of morning my spirits rose. Love's delicious spell re-asserted itself; its enchanting rays lighted up my soul. Pain and embarrassment fled, and bliss returned. To love and to be loved, and at the same time to be unhappy, seemed utterly incompatible. With the remembrance of a tender parting embrace thrilling my being, I took my way to the business house of Tyrands & Co., my step energized by the thought that I was going to work for Edith, and my pity going forth to every person I met or passed upon the road; for, unfortunate beings, they did not know or love Edith Carleton!

On reaching the office, I found several of my fellow-clerks already at their posts, and, bidding them a cheerful "good-morning," I mounted my usual stool, and drew forward a pile of letters. In the act of opening the first of these I was startled by the abrupt address of a young man at my right hand, who, laying down a newspaper over which he had been engaged, inquired,—

"I say, Matheson, were you ever in Australia?"

An electric shock seemed to pass through my frame as these words fell upon my ears; but I replied promptly, and in a tone which sounded sharp and unnatural,—

"No: certainly not. Why do you ask me?"

"Oh, no very particular reason," replied he, laughing. "But there are two rather singular advertisements in this paper, both relating to a fellow called Henry Carruthers, who, it seems, has chosen your name, Matheson,—Charles Matheson too,—as an alias. Listen. There seem to be two parties advertising for him."

And he read aloud,—

"If Henry Carruthers, who reached Australia, from England, in April, 1844, and who is supposed to have sailed thence on the first of July following, in the ship "Ocean Star," and under the assumed name of Charles Matheson, will communicate with his friends, he will hear of something greatly to his advantage."

"That's the first notice," remarked my companion, passing his thumb down the margin of the paper; "and—yes, here's the second:—

"Wanted, the present address of Henry Carruthers, native of Durham, age twenty-one, tall, good figure, fair complexion, aquiline nose, dark-gray eyes"—

"By Jove, Matheson, the description tallies!—only you must be more than twenty-one, with that flourishing beard."

And my companion looked at me with a scrutinizing gaze in which I detected some suspicion.

"I am just twenty-five," I returned, struggling to appear collected, though I felt my lips quivering as I spoke. "I was born in Lancashire, and have never been either in Durham or in Australia; and my name is not Carruthers."

Having thus dismissed the subject, I opened my letter, and affected to become absorbed in its contents. But not a syllable could I decipher. The words swam before my eyes: a great terror had taken possession of my soul.

My safety had, I saw, been but a delusive fancy: my sin was at last finding me out. The bloodhounds of the law were upon my track. That advertisement promising something to my advantage had been inserted only as a lure to tempt me to self-disclosure. I should yet be captured as a murderer tried, and perhaps condemned! It was true:

I reasoned, in an attempt to re-assure myself, there had been no witness of my crime, and there could therefore be no positive proof of it. But, alas! was not the incidental evidence of an overwhelming nature? Though none, so far as I knew, had seen me leave the farm, my entrance to it had been observed by two individuals: first by Farmer O'Hagan himself, whom I had encountered in the lane leading off the Melbourne road, and again by one of his laborers, who had asked me the time, and who had, as I clearly remembered, stood watching me as I cantered across the fields to join my friend, whom he doubtless recognized in the distance equally well with myself. It was the existence of these two witnesses to my presence upon the farm on that fatal day which had helped to terrify me into flight; but it was, in fact, that flight itself, together with my assumption of a false name, and continued perseverance in hiding, which furnished the most damning evidence against me. My conscience had made a coward of me, and my cowardice had risen up against me in condemnation.

There was no hope, I felt, but in the failure of the efforts which were now being made for my discovery. And that these efforts would fail I tried hard to believe. In all probability they had been going on for some time. My uncle must long since have grown anxious on my account, and by his inquiries had doubtless contributed to my danger. The advertisements which had just been read to me, or similar ones, might have appeared in the daily newspapers many times previously. This, for aught I knew, might easily be, as, from fear of seeing any reference to the catastrophe, I had, since quitting Australia, carefully avoided looking into any publication which might contain an account of it. So far, however, these and whatsoever other means might have been employed to discover my whereabouts had failed of result. I struggled to hope they might continue to do so.

A month passed, and a renewed sense of security began to steal upon me. If the advertising continued, I did not know of it; for I still avoided newspapers, and the young man who had drawn my attention to the two notices, probably satisfied that I was not the Harry Carruthers referred to in them, did not again allude to the subject.

It was, I should think, between five and six weeks after this alarming occurrence

that I returned home one evening, all anxieties forgotten, and in a high state of delight. A gentleman who had occupied a very important position in the office had been obliged to leave suddenly, on account of ill-health, and my employers, having discovered that I was not only a good accountant, but, if I may be allowed to say it, a first-rate linguist, had, to my extreme surprise and satisfaction, offered me the vacant post, for which these qualifications fitted me, and along with it a salary which would enable me to look forward to a speedy marriage.

We had taken tea, and, seated around a bright little fire in Mrs. Carleton's back sitting-room, — Edith by my side, and her mother in an opposite corner, — I was in the act of imparting the joyful intelligence, which I had purposely kept back until that moment, when a somewhat loud knock on the outer door startled us all.

"A gentleman wishes to see you, sir," announced the maid, on entering the room a few seconds later.

"To see me?" I echoed, in quick alarm and bewilderment: "why, who can it be?"

And I felt myself grow pale as I reflected that I had not a single acquaintance in London saving those at the warehouse, and that not to one among these had I ever imparted my address.

"Did the gentleman give his name, Mary?" I inquired.

"No, sir, he did n't," stammered Mary, blushing, and moving aside. "This is the gentleman, sir."

And she held open the door for a stout, good-humored-looking man, dressed like a respectable tradesman, who had evidently been standing at her elbow, and who now, without further ceremony, entered, leaving the door a little ajar.

The man, who was an entire stranger to me, had, I could see, expected to find me alone; for upon perceiving my companions, he drew back slightly. When, however, advancing hastily, with the remark, "You wish to speak with me? We will go into another room," I was about to lead him into my own apartment, he stepped smilingly between me and the door, and bowing low to Mrs. Carleton said, —

"Oh, no need, sir: no need. If the ladies will excuse, I can say what I have to say here. I sha'n't detain you a minute, sir."

"Pray don't trouble yourself to leave the

room, Mr. Matheson," remonstrated Mrs. Carleton, politely addressing me, and at the same time motioning my visitor to a chair.

There was no help for it; and, devoutly trusting that the singular-mannered intruder, who had without further invitation seated himself, might, as his appearance indicated, be only an enterprising tailor or wine-merchant who had called to solicit my patronage, I dropped into a chair opposite the one chosen by him, and with my heart in my mouth awaited the introduction of his business. The first words dissolved my hope that he was a tradesman, confirmed a suspicion that he was a detective officer, and caused me to feel suddenly collected from very intensity of apprehension.

"I think, sir," he observed, carelessly twisting round his hat as he spoke, "that you was born at Belmont, near Durham, and that you was brought up in the neighborhood of Hartlepool with an uncle by the name of Mr. Benjamin Carruthers. Now was n't you, sir?"

"No, my man, I was not," I rejoined calmly. "My birthplace is in Lancashire. But, pray, may I ask what you have to do with my antecedents?"

"Oh, bless you, sir! don't you be uneasy now," affably replied my interlocutor. "I 'm a-bringing you good news, if so be you 're the man I want. By jingo! 't is n't often you 'll find a gent hiding from a fortune. Then your real name is n't Henry Carruthers, Mr. Matheson?"

And a pair of sharp eyes fixed themselves upon my face.

"Certainly not," I answered, boldly returning the gaze, and resolved to fight with my fate to the last.

"And you never was in Australia, I suppose?"

I glanced at Edith and her mother, and noticed that they were listening to the conversation with expressions of extreme surprise. Before them I could not, of course, deny that I had visited Australia, — yet I shrank from the admission.

"Why do you come here, man, questioning me in this fashion?" I exclaimed angrily, evading his inquiry. "Tell me at once what it is you want with me, or take yourself off."

"Come, come, my dear sir," remonstrated the visitor, smiling with imperturbable self-complacency: "don't you go and get riled, now. I was only going to ask if you did n't

often go a-visiting to Bushland Farm when you was over in Australia, and if you was n't a particular friend of a Mr. Sydney West, who was living in the service of the owner; let's see, what was his name? O'Hagan."

It had come, then, at last! I turned sick and cold. My self-possession was deserting me; but I would not succumb, and once more I uttered a desperate denial.

"I have no acquaintance with any Bushland Farm, and I never knew a Mr. Sydney West."

"What! old fellow? Never knew me?"

The words came from behind my chair: the voice was not the voice of my late interrogator. I sprang up as though I had been shot. I supported myself against the table, and gazed at the apparition of a fine, sunburnt, handsome young man who stood in the open doorway. Then with a cry of joy — joy which, in its first intensity, was almost an agony — I rushed forward, and clasped him in my arms.

"Sydney! Sydney! Then I did not kill you? Oh, thank Heaven! thank Heaven!"

And, as I thus exclaimed, I felt the room swim round with me, and become suddenly dark.

I had been unmarly enough to swoon. When I recovered consciousness, I found myself stretched upon a sofa, Mrs. Carleton bending over me, in the act of applying restoratives, and Edith standing by her side, her sweet eyes turned upon me with a pained, questioning expression. I could not bear the look, and stretching out my hand I drew her toward me.

"O my darling! my darling! I have deceived you," I cried: "I have been a wretched impostor. But I will confess all now, Edith. And, O Edith! you will forgive me, will you not? I loved you so, Edith! O my beloved! forgive me, — forgive me!"

"Hush, Charlie! the men are coming back," whispered Edith, withdrawing herself from my embrace.

In another instant Sydney was by my side with a bottle of brandy, which, at Mrs. Carleton's request, he had been to the cellar in search of. The man whom I had rightly conjectured to be a detective policeman, and who had left and re-entered the room with Sydney, having likewise advanced, and perceiving that I was recovered now, took a hasty leave, saying that he would hope to see me on the morrow, when I should have

learned from my friend what share he had had in finding out me and my abode, and what had been the motive for the quest. And after his departure mutual confidences and explanations ensued, of which I need give only an outline.

The blow, which, to my misery, I had so long believed to have been fatal in its effects, had in reality only stunned my friend. Returning to himself, after what must have been a long-protracted syncope, he had felt bewildered to find himself almost buried amid rank grass, and half-smothered by brushwood. But quickly divining the reason for his concealment, and, as a matter of course, the perpetrator of the tell-tale act, he had, in his first anger and disgust, resolved to take no steps to undeceive me, but to allow me to suffer to the full the fright and distress which he well knew my mistake in supposing him dead would occasion. That I had intended to slay him, however, or to do him any serious injury, Sydney, as he repeatedly assured me, had never for a moment believed.

How long his resolution to keep me in ignorance of the truth would, under ordinary circumstances, have lasted cannot now be told; for in less than a week from the occurrence of that disastrous quarrel my friend was incapacitated from either writing to or seeking for me. A severe cold, brought on doubtless by having lain so long upon the damp grass, was followed by an attack of ague, and afterward by a low fever, attended by delirium. For three months Sydney kept his bed, for the most part unconscious, his life frequently despaired of; and when, at length, amendment set in, it was a full month longer before he was able to walk any distance. His first act, however, on regaining ability to make such an effort, was to ride over to Melbourne, and institute anxious inquiries concerning me. These at the first proved unsuccessful; but in the end he found out that I had sailed for England under the fictitious name of Matheson. He then wrote to my uncle to know whether I had returned home; but to this letter he received no reply. Fancying, after a time, that it might have miscarried, — which, in-

deed, was the case, — he wrote again and again; but with the same ill-success. At length he received a letter from a stranger, stating that, as acting attorney on behalf of the late Mr. B. Carruthers, he had opened several letters which had been following that gentleman from place to place over the continent, where he had for many months been traveling in hopes of recruiting his health, and among others he had read those of Mr. West.

The attorney then proceeded to inform Sydney that, my uncle being dead, I had inherited the entailed family estates, as also a large amount of private property devised to me by my relative; but that all his attempts to communicate with me had hitherto failed. That I had quitted Melbourne he gathered from the fact that letters addressed to me there had been returned to him; but I had not, he stated, re-appeared in England, and he believed I had not yet left Australia, since my name could not be found in any shipping intelligence of the country.

Some further correspondence between my friend and the lawyer had issued in Sydney's coming over to England to assist in the active search then set on foot for my discovery. Advertisements had been addressed to me, and detectives employed, — with what final result has been seen by the reader.

A few words will now complete my story. Before coming to England, Sydney West had married Kathleen O'Hagan, and he had brought his wife over with him for a wedding-trip; which facts he communicated to me with very unnecessary reluctance on the morning after our joyful and, to me, so unexpected reunion.

Two months later, forgiven by Sydney and Edith, at peace with the whole world, my heart overflowing with gratitude for my deliverance from the awful burden I had so long borne in secret, and with a firm resolution in my mind that henceforth no thought, word, or action of mine should be stained by the slightest semblance of falsehood or hypocrisy, I too was upon my wedding-trip.

MY SKETCHING.

BY MISS E. E. KELLY.

We went to the mountains, and of course I took my sketching materials with me. What young lady would go to the mountains without her portfolio and pencils?

Papa had engaged accommodations for *mamma* and me at a hotel in the most charming of valleys right in the midst of the Catskills.

There were few visitors there when we arrived. This suited us very well; for we came for the quiet enjoyment of mountain solitude, rather than for the dress and gaiety of hotel life.

Mamma was an invalid, and I had not been very strong lately; so papa brought us here, saying that a month of the Catskills would quite "set us both up again."

We reached the hotel early in the afternoon. Our host had not expected us until later, or he would have waited dinner for us.

However, he sent a nice little lunch up to room.

Having eaten it, and unpacked our trunk, we lay down for a short rest.

About five o'clock, when the shadows were beginning to lengthen, and the vale presented its most lovely aspect, we arose, and took a walk.

We followed a path which lay along the edge of a rocky cliff, quite precipitous in character. As we proceeded, the sound of water dashing and foaming reached our ears, and grew louder at each step.

Below, deep in the ravine, flowed a small river; but the sound came not from that source.

"It must be a cascade," said mamma. "Perhaps that is where this path leads to."

"It can't be far,—let us go on till we come to it," said I.

We walked some distance farther. The path turned inward from the cliff, and we lost sight of the ravine, a huge mass of rock and earth interposing itself.

Presently, however, this was passed, and we emerged once more,—this time upon a platform of rock, where it ended.

Here we found the cascade which had charmed our ears with its wild music.

The water leaped from an elevation of perhaps a hundred feet into a rocky basin a little below the level of the path, forming a turbid pool there, whose overflow escaped down the side of the ravine into the stream already mentioned.

It was a lovely spot, and others besides ourselves had evidently thought so; for upon the broad ledge where we stood was erected a rustic cottage for the convenience of visitors who might wish to spend a part of their time there.

A rail, too, was placed at the edge of the precipice, that we might stand there and look down without danger.

Of course we valued our lives too highly to lean very heavily upon this rail, though it seemed to be quite firmly secured to its place.

"To think," I exclaimed enthusiastically, "that such a beautiful scene should terminate our first walk."

"Yes," responded mamma. "Father knew whereof he spoke when he promised us a treat in the way of scenery."

"I shall come here and sketch tomorrow," I said.

And I kept my word.

The next morning saw mamma and myself comfortably seated on a bench there, mamma holding part of my utensils for me while I drew.

I sketched on for more than an hour. At last mamma grew weary.

"I think I'll go back to the hotel, and lie down a while," she said, rising, and laying her lapful upon the bench beside me.

"When you finish your picture, you will come too. Don't stay long, or I shall worry. Besides, it is near dinner-time."

I offered to put up my work, and accompany her; but she would not hear of it, so I went on, saying to myself,—

"I'll just put a few finishing touches to this sketch, and then follow and overtake her before she reaches the hotel."

But "finishing touches" always take an unaccountable length of time, and I suppose I had worked on some fifteen minutes when my adventure commenced.

It began with a sense of companionship which grew upon me, and could not be shaken off.

I have had this feeling when only an unseen bird was near,—passing away when the little creature came within my range of vision.

However, I knew there was no bird that could cause the growing uneasiness now oppressing me.

I looked about on all sides, but could see no one, not even a rabbit or a squirrel. No living creature was in sight.

"Pshaw!" I exclaimed, angry at my own silly fears. "It's all foolishness: or perhaps it's mamma returning."

Nevertheless, I began to pack up my drawing implements.

As I did so, there was a rustling sound among the bushes beyond the cascade. Presently the branches parted, and a young man stepped forth upon the edge of the chasm.

He was evidently out hunting, for he carried a gun and an ammunition-flask.

But what immediately caught my attention was the look of horror upon his face, and the desperate haste with which he freed himself from the entangled bush, and, raising his gun, pointed it to the tree above my head.

I looked up hurriedly to behold a large, cat-like animal upon one of the branches, crouched in a menacing attitude, its tail slowly waving, its fur rising, its hungry, savage eyes gleaming, as it prepared to spring upon me!

It seemed as if my muscles would never act, though hardly a second of time could have elapsed before I had darted under the sheltering roof of the rustic cottage.

At the same instant my deliverer's gun sounded, and its reverberations rang up and down the ravine until the force of the explosion had literally exhausted itself, and I could hear no further sound.

Almost simultaneously with the report my enemy's body came crashing to the ground within a few feet of the spot where a few minutes before I had been sketching so tranquilly.

Was he dead? or would he still spring upon me, helpless as I was?

My heart stood still with terror until I saw that he was quite limp and lifeless. The ball must have been well aimed to do its work so instantaneously.

I looked across the chasm. There stood my preserver, sharply eyeing the dead monster, his gun leveled ready to discharge a second barrel if the animal showed any signs of lingering life.

At last he appeared satisfied of its powerlessness to do further harm, and transferred his gaze to me.

What handsome dark eyes! They thrilled me through and through.

He touched his cap respectfully, laid his gun upon the rock, shot another distrustful glance at his victim, and prepared to climb down the gorge, apparently with a view of crossing to my side.

I stepped to the rail, and looked down to watch his progress.

My portfolio, which I had filled and fastened, preparatory to leaving the place, had been thrown from my lap with the violence of my start, when I perceived the foe in the tree-top, into the ravine, where it now lay about six feet below the surface,—having lodged in a bush which interrupted its descent.

Was it for this that my gallant preserver was now risking his life?

I called faintly, —

"Do not go down for the book."

"I must be sure that the panther is dead," he replied.

It was a panther, then! I looked back with a shudder at the beautiful brute lying there, formidable looking and graceful, even in death.

Slayer and slain both were beautiful.

The sportsman's speech was purely American, though such eyes, and such a voice, I had never before known one of my countrymen to possess.

He reached the miniature lake formed by the falling water, and, partly wading, partly climbing, crossed it to the hither side.

He had to descend a little further in order to obtain the portfolio. He grasped it, but with this additional cumber he could not climb up the side of the gorge.

"Have you anything that I could tie to it?" he inquired, raising those wonderful eyes to mine once more.

I thought of my nubia. It was a long one,—it might reach. I took it off, and carefully lowered it. But I dared not go near the edge, for there was no rail in that spot; so it would not reach him unless I let go. I knew his object well enough to be aware that this would not do.

"Wait one moment, please," I cried, and quickly tore from my head the long ribbon which kept back my hair; for I had curled it that morning, school-girl fashion.

This I tied firmly to the end of the nubia, lengthening it sufficiently for our purpose.

The portfolio was attached to the other end, and I drew it up without difficulty.

"Please do not untie it," he said, "until I reach you."

Why he made that request I was at a loss to imagine, though I felt bound to respect it.

"Perhaps he wants to show his gallantry by untying it himself," I thought. "Or perhaps there is some secret about the knots."

I have since solved the problem: he only wanted to see how I looked without nubia, hat, or hair-ribbon.

In the excitement of the moment I never once thought of my appearance, or I should at least have replaced my hat.

In a few seconds he had reached the top.

Again those eyes met mine, and seemed filled with a quiet approbation. But he was a gentleman, and a glance was sufficient.

He stooped and undid the knots with nimble fingers, and gave me the various articles which they united with a captivating, cavalier-like air.

There was something delightfully foreign about him. Was it French? No. Was it Italian? No. Perhaps it was only a peculiar polish gained by traveling abroad.

I was positive he was an American, and a thorough American at that.

"Now we will attend to our fallen foe," he said, as he approached the dead animal.

"Did you say it was a panther?" I asked timidly.

"Yes, it is a panther," he replied; "and I never saw one in these woods before, — though I have hunted here many times."

"I suppose it saved itself to frighten me," said I. "Such things always do."

"Did you ever have an adventure like this before?"

"No, not quite so bad," I replied, with a shudder.

There was a merry twinkle in the eyes in response to this, and of course I made matters worse by trying to explain.

"I don't mean," I began, and then stopped short, while I could feel the color rising to the roots of my hair.

But those orbs knew enough now to be

intent upon the panther; and I was very glad they were turned away.

"I understand you," said their owner. "You mean you were never in such peril before."

"Yes," I answered feebly, and proceeded to tie up my hair, and put on my hat and nubia.

"Is it quite dead?" I asked, when ready to go.

"Yes, beyond a doubt. But, for fear he may have a brother near, may I ask the pleasure of seeing you safely back to your hotel?"

"But you are unarmed."

"Not quite: I have a pistol and knife."

"Some one might carry your gun off."

"Never fear."

"How will you return to it?"

"The way I came."

"It is very dangerous. I prefer to watch you safely across. I would not have you lose your own life through saving mine."

"There is a road around. I will take that, if you wish."

"I most certainly do."

"I can only take it at your hotel."

"Then we will be companions for that distance. Will you not dry your feet, however, and take dinner with us before you return?"

"I shall be happy to accept your invitation; but — how about the gun?"

I could not help smiling at this bit of retaliation.

"You had better lose your gun than catch cold."

We walked down the lonely path in silence for some distance, both, like the Irishman's owl, keeping up a very hard thinking, though neither spoke.

At last I tried to thank him, and, as might have been expected, failed miserably.

"I want to tell you how grateful I am; but I don't know how," I ended, in desperation.

"I am afraid," said he calmly, "that when you think the matter over you will find you have greatly overrated my services. However, if we become better acquainted, and you still feel thankful, I believe a way of expressing your thanks will be some day given you."

"Do you think so?" I said a little coldly, I hardly knew why.

He seemed the least bit surprised and

hurt at my change of manner, but said nothing.

The silence became oppressive again, and I broke it with the remark, —

"Strange you should happen upon the scene when you did. And I knew nothing of my danger until I saw you take aim."

"Yes: it was a curious accident. A moment more, and it would have been too late."

It was his turn to shudder now.

"I was out hunting," he went on presently. "I expected to meet some friends at my hotel; but they will not arrive until to-morrow, so I came out alone today to try the sport before they came. When we are together we stay out three or four days, or even a week, at a time. I am stopping at a house some four or five miles from yours, I should judge. My name is Hammond. Will you accept my card?"

"Certainly: thank you. Do you wish mine in return?"

"I do," he replied quietly; "but I would not express the wish, lest you might feel bound to grant it against your own."

I gave him the card, and took the one he offered me. "Perry J. Hammond" was the name printed upon it in neat type.

I then told him how I came to be where the panther found me, and what a short time I had been alone.

I half feared he would ask to see some of my sketches; but, though he eyed the portfolio, which he carried himself, he spared me the humiliation of showing the pictures inside.

"Good!" thought I, as soon as I was sure

he did not intend to ask. "He will think they are magnificent, because he has not seen them."

We soon reached the hotel, and, while Mr. Hammond sought an interview with the landlord, I ran up-stairs to mamma.

"Mother," said I hurriedly, for the second bell had rung, "there is a gentleman here to dinner whom I met in the woods. He was out hunting, and wet his feet. You must be very good to him, for he saved my life. His name is Mr. Hammond."

"Saved your life! And from what? You did n't fall over the cliff, did you?"

"No, no: I am too careful for that. I'll tell you all about it after dinner."

I was ready, by this time, to go down: so mother and I descended arm-in-arm.

After the meal, Mr. Hammond was formally introduced to us by the landlord, who knew him, both by reputation, and by yearly meetings.

He had taken a solitary dinner, not caring to present himself at table in his hunting-suit.

My name is now Mrs. Hammond.

The panther-skin has been preserved, and the precious gun, now rusty, is where I can take a peep at it whenever I like.

Percy has seen my sketches, and taught me to make better ones, though he pretended to admire even them.

It was only last evening that he told me why he wanted the knots left tied; and it brought the whole so clearly back to me that, thinking the adventure part might interest you, I have written it out.

MY STEP-SON.

BY LYDIA MARIA WINDSOR.

I had been married just a year when my life experienced its first great trouble, — a trouble self-increased by the willful pride and rebellion with which my headstrong girlhood met it.

Hitherto my path had been particularly sunny. The only child of wealthy and indulgent parents, I had become engaged at eighteen years old to Kendal Darcy, a rising barrister, some years my senior, whom I loved with a warmth only equaled by my satisfaction when I found that the affection was mutual. My father warned him that such a spoilt child would prove troublesome; but Kendal had no fears on that point, and as yet our wedded life had cast little enough of shadow upon us.

Now and then I did indeed notice upon my husband's face a grave, pre-occupied expression that I failed to understand, but I knew he was intrusted with important issues, and, loving his profession as he did, it was no wonder that his mind should entertain its concerns, even when he rested from its duties in his beautiful home at

South Kensington. I guessed not that scenes in his past life were the phantoms so frequently arising before him, haunting him even in his present happiness, unsuspected by his joyous girl-wife.

I was now about twenty years old, and happier than ever, for a beautiful infant boy had crept into our life and love. Ah, what marvelous hopes clustered round the rose-pink *berceaunette* wherein reposed what the papers announced as our "son and heir"! Kendal used to pinch my cheeks, calling us a couple of babies, when he watched us together; but I knew that he was as proud of our little Frank as myself, though his smile was so quiet and his looks were so subdued as he held the wee dimpled hand in his own.

Never shall I forget the morning when we became aware that baby was not the "son and heir," — that Kendal had a living son, and that I was a step-mother. We were breakfasting together in our favorite room, and the flowers were nodding in at us through the open windows, whilst the canaries sang their sweetest, when my husband

received a black-bordered letter that turned his face ghastly white as he perused it. I hurried to get him brandy, fearing he was going to faint. I guessed that something was amiss in his banking or professional affairs, but I could not annoy him with questions, and silently I knelt beside him, putting my arms around him.

The story was told by and by, quickly and abruptly; but it was very long ere I realized the truth, — that I was a second wife. In the early days of our acquaintance, Kendal had heard me speak disparagingly of a friend's marriage, vowing that nothing should induce me to marry a widower. It was then that he had most unfortunately resolved to keep the fact of his previous marriage private; and I could well understand how much suffering the deception had caused him.

As a youth of twenty-one he had met his first wife, the pretty daughter of a yeoman-farmer, and the belle of the village where his guardian Colonel Grant resided. Home from college for his vacation, he was delighted for so pleasant an acquaintance to beguile the tedium of his stay at the Hall, and their dance at the harvest-home was the prelude to a very warm friendship. Their constant meetings in the sunny meadows and shady lanes were a most agreeable change from the hard studies in which Kendal had been engaged. No word save of sympathetic friendship had been exchanged between them when he returned to college; but, whilst his labors there soon drove his pretty companion from his mind, her weaker nature was completely changed by the past few weeks. By and by he was recalled to the village by a stern note from his guardian, who informed him on arrival that Alice Graham was believed to be in a hopeless consumption, and that she had despairingly betrayed the secret of her love to her mother, who had, unknown to herself, appealed to Colonel Grant for his advice. Kendal was shocked indeed when he saw the change in the girl he had left so rosy and blooming; and, though he knew he did not deserve all the blame his guardian and her friends evidently considered his due, he could not hold himself entirely innocent in the matter.

It was a sad affair. My husband spoke of it with a trembling voice, and in deep agitation. It seemed as though the very tendrils of Alice Graham's life were twined

round one who realized now that pity was the utmost feeling of his heart toward her.

Her father insisted on marriage; his strictly honorable guardian advised the same course, seeing that "the difference of station had not prevented the courting." Her mother "did not speak, but she looked in his face till his heart was like to break," whilst the village doctor believed it was the one chance for her cure, and Alice herself, on hearing whispers of such a scheme, appeared quite a new creature.

Kendal was married then in obedience to Colonel Grant's wishes and the promptings of his own good feeling, and, on his guardian's death from a fall in the hunting-field, he came into possession of a substantial provision. His legal studies had kept him much away from home, but he always treated his wife with the kindest consideration, and it was a real grief to him when, in consequence of the sudden tidings of Colonel Grant's accident, a premature birth cost the young mother her life. The baby-boy became Kendal's one solace in his double loss. I knew too well what he felt when he held his first-born in his arms, and my heart grew dry and hard at the thought that such emotions had been excited by another than my little Frank.

As Kendal's duties called him away from the village, Alice's mother proposed to take charge of the baby; and, seeing that she had lately adopted an orphan baby of a late neighbor's, and that it was thriving most admirably, he readily agreed to allow her a certain sum for the child's support. In a year or two, however, he intended to take a London house for himself, and he made it distinctly understood that the child was to leave his grandparents then to be brought up under his father's roof.

About nine months had elapsed, when he heard from Mrs. Graham that the child had succumbed to an attack of croup. Wifeless and childless, he hurried down to the tiny new-made grave, close to that of the mother, — for little Willie was already buried. The farmer was ill with rheumatic fever, and Mrs. Graham was so worried and upset that Kendal did not speak with her long. He put away the past from him as a dream, and from that day to this he had never brought himself to visit the neighborhood again.

What, then, were his feelings on reading the letter received this morning? It was

from the Vicar of Springmead, announcing the death of the aged woman Graham, who had been long a widow, and inclosing a letter addressed to "Willie's Father." During her last illness she had fully confessed to the clergyman the imposture of which she had been guilty, begging however that it might not be revealed to her son-in-law till she had passed beyond his wrath. Kendal's boy was still alive and nearly seven years old; it was her neighbor's child that had died in infancy, but her great love for her grandson and dread of losing him had tempted her to take advantage of the circumstance to retain her darling with her. The Vicar had soon traced Mr. Darcy, the barrister, to his abode, and he wrote that Mrs. Graham, even at the last, did not seem to realize the extent of her wrong-doing; it seemed to her partly excused by the indulgent care lavished on the child she had taught to call her "grannie," and by the fact that she had never accepted the help of a farthing from her son-in-law since she had imposed upon him. Since her husband's death the small farm had suffered great misfortunes; it appeared that it was now to be sold, and the proceeds were to pay the debts the widow's slender means had forced her to contract.

"My blue-eyed baby alive," cried Kendal, as if speaking to himself,—"given back to me as it were from the grave! I can even forgive the cruel wrong in the joy that is swallowing up every other feeling,—the joy to know that my son is not dead!"

At that moment I almost hated my husband; his heart seemed so far from me and my baby that a passion of jealous anger seemed rending my soul. With bitter cutting words did I reproach him for his deceit, and his only answer was a silent look of pain; but when, incensed by his quiet manner, I began to hint that the child's training had not been such as to fit him for our house, I saw my husband angry with me for the first time in his life.

"A child of six or seven," said he, "can scarcely be considered as trained to perfection,—even Frank at that age will sometimes need our fond correction; but I suppose he will be no less our much-loved son."

"Frank has nothing to do with the present matter," was my haughty reply; "my son will always be a gentleman."

I was ashamed of my words as soon as spoken, but Kendal made no reply. He

walked up and down the room for several minutes ere he said,—

"I am going down to Springmead today, and shall probably bring Willie home on Wednesday evening. Come, mamma," he added tenderly, "I know I can trust your woman's heart toward him."

"You are mistaken," rejoined I quickly, "if you suppose I shall trouble myself in the least concerning him. I never arranged for the trying life of a step-mother. Frank's nurse has quite enough to do. But the boy is old enough to attend to himself now. If you take my advice, you will send him to a thoroughly select school for some time before you bring him home."

"You must allow me to decide that matter," said Kendal coldly. "My house is my son's home. I will take care that no trouble concerning him shall fall upon yourself or nurse. Millicent,"—and he tried to take my hand,—"*do not let us prolong our first disagreement. You must know how deep is my love for my wife and our baby, but you would despise me in your heart if I felt no yearning toward my first-born.*"

"I have no wish to make matters unpleasant," returned I, withdrawing my hand. "I only wish to know where the child is to sleep, for nurse will object to have another in the nursery, and the rooms are all disposed of."

"He can have the small red room for a bedroom," answered Kendal curtly.

I had always meant to turn this room into a day-nursery by and by, and I was not at all pleased to find my plans frustrated. Without another word or look toward my husband, I hurried up-stairs to my baby to pour into his unconscious ears all my indignant and tumultuous feelings.

My husband tried no more to reconcile me to the fact of the child's residence with us. I saw that he was as displeased with my conduct as I was with his own. But surely I had reason to be angry. Not only was I his second wife,—a position to which I had a strong objection,—but a vulgar farm-bred boy was to come amongst us, stealing from my baby the father's love and the rights of the first-born that should have been his.

Bitter tears did I shed that day beside the cradle when Kendal had left for Springmead with a "Good-by, Millicent," called from the bottom of the stairs. I imagined that I had already become less dear to him,

and laid the whole blame of the unpleasantness upon the boy who had come between us.

"Never mind, my baby!" I cried, pressing my lips to little Frank's velvet cheek. "We will love and comfort one another through it all."

On Wednesday morning I received a long, fond letter from my husband, full of tender words for myself and baby, blaming himself for his secrecy, and pleading very hard for a mother's love for his son, however troublesome he might prove at first. He said that he had already seen my parents, having stopped for that purpose when half-way to Springmead, and that they had treated him with forbearing kindness he could never forget. Instead of adding this letter to the precious packet in my dressing-case, I tore it up after the first perusal; I was far too angry with my fate to be just toward my husband.

I asked my cousin Mrs. Tudor to spend the day with me, and she came to lunch, accompanied by her two children, and her sister Miss Clemence, — their presence would take away some of the awkward nervousness with which I looked forward to Kendal's return. I did not enlarge on the facts of the case, but told them simply that Mr. Darcy had been deceived as to the death of his first wife's child, taking it for granted that they were aware of a previous marriage. My cousins showed neither surprise nor curiosity, whatever their feelings may have been. Miss Clemence hoped Willie would be a good boy, and give me no annoyance; and Mrs. Tudor, turning to her boy and girl, expensively dressed in the height of fashion, hoped they would be good friends with the new cousin that they would see that evening.

It was nearly six o'clock when a cab drove up to the door, and I heard my husband's voice through the open window. A tastefully spread tea waited upon the table, — for we had made the luncheon our dinner, as Archie and Beatrice Tudor could not be kept out late. We were laughing and chatting pleasantly when Kendal came in; little Frank, in his very best lace robe, lay fast asleep in my lap, and I had no intention of waking him by disturbing my position in any way.

My husband treated my relatives very cordially, though I fancy he was disagreeably surprised at their presence; at any

rate, he went back into the hall, saying, "Run up-stairs with Martha, Willie, and get yourself tidy; for tea is quite ready."

"I have engaged a nurse for Willie at a registry-office," said Kendal to me in an undertone; "he is far from strong, and Martha will see to him entirely. Sturdy fellow this!" he added, turning to Miss Clemence as he bent to kiss the baby.

I knew that he wanted me to look at him, that he might read my feelings in my eyes; but I kept my face resolutely bent down, in deep displeasure that a servant had been added to our household independently of my own will and choice.

Kendal was thoroughly nervous when he brought his son into the room, and bade him shake hands all round. My careless glance as I touched his hand revealed a thin, pale child, very awkward and frightened, in a black sailor-suit of country make, presenting a marked contrast to the self-possessed little Tudors who stared at him with the curiosity incident to their age. It was a relief that he was not vulgar-looking; however, I chose to mistake his shyness for ill-breeding, and determined to punish Kendal thoroughly through the child. Little Willie sat beside his father at tea, and, finding his child so little noticed, Kendal lavished upon him a fondness that inflamed my jealousy every moment. His first choice at the table being a slice of very rich cake, of which the smallest morsel was sufficient for children, my husband, with the thoughtlessness of a man, heaped his plate with it. I knew that such a meal after such a long journey would certainly harm the child, but I had not the grace to clothe my remonstrance pleasantly. I turned to Kendal with the cold remark, —

"That slice should be divided between the three children; no child should eat so much rich cake."

"It won't hurt Willie," said Kendal obstinately; and, without noticing me further, he turned to converse with Mrs. Tudor.

I noticed, however, that after the first taste little Willie only crumbled his food, gazing round the table with crimsoning cheeks, and gulping down his tea as though forcing back something in his throat. I was becoming as nervous as the child, for I had a horror of scenes, and I knew very well what was coming.

"Eat your cake, Willie, like a man," said

my husband, as a lull in the conversation took place.

"I am afraid he has a very poor appetite," remarked Miss Clemence; "he has eaten nothing as yet."

Dismayed to find himself the object of general attention, Willie hastily swallowed a piece of cake, and then what I had foreseen took place. He buried his face in his small thin hands, and, pushing away his plate, burst out crying. If my husband had been absent, I must have taken the motherless boy in my arms and hushed him as I did my own Frank; as it was, I looked at the sleeping child on the couch, and remarked that he would be ill all night if suddenly awakened. Miss Clemence told Willie nobody would love him if he was not well-behaved; Mrs. Tudor said something about "spoilt children;" Archie abruptly produced a stick of chocolate from his pocket and forced it between Willie's fingers, and little Beatrice twined her arms around his neck, whispering, "Please don't cry, cousin."

"The child is tired out," said I; "he cries only from fatigue. He had better go to bed and have something to eat there."

Kendal was very much annoyed at this public manifestation. He gave me a look almost of disgust at the indifference of my tones, and then, raising Willie gently in his arms, he carried him away. The last sound I heard was, "Grannie! I do want my Grannie!" and the wailing cry haunted me throughout the evening.

From that time a great coldness arose between my husband and myself; whilst outwardly the same united couple, both were conscious that a barrier, in the shape of little Willie, really separated us. It so happened that this was term-time, when Kendal was constantly occupied from home; but, when we were together, I easily recognized the absence of his former little tendernesses, and my heart grew harder and harder against the child who, I chose to believe, had usurped my place.

Willie was left entirely to the management of his nurse, a person whose cringing manners toward myself at once prejudiced me against her. She was constantly complaining to me of the willfulness of her charge, and I told her at last that he had been under her sole control for several weeks, and I had hoped for a report of a slight improvement at least. My great

wish was to get the child away to school; evil passions once encouraged pervert the better nature, and, despite the occasional whispers of conscience, I throw off all responsibility concerning him, disliking even the sound of his voice or the mention of his name. If Kendal was displeased with his home-training, why did he not send him away?

"That boy is always crying," said my husband irritably one morning, as he pulled on his gloves in the hall. "I wonder what is the matter now."

"It is perfectly dreadful at his age," returned I. "Mamma will be here next week, and I am sure the noise will quite upset her."

"Willie must go to school next quarter," said he; "it will be altogether better for him than this house."

He turned toward the door, for our fond adieux were things of the past; but I saw before us a return of the old happy days, when Willie should no longer be an ever-present source of disagreement, and my heart went out yearningly toward my husband.

"You might spare me a kiss," said I, coloring, and I put my hand on his arm.

There was a sort of affection in his look, as he answered sternly;—

"When I have once seen you kiss my child, I shall know you care for such tokens from me. Till then, let neither of us pretend regard, Millicent."

"Be it so," said I, white with angry pride. "You will never see me kiss that boy. I hate the very sight of him!"

"Take care of what you are saying," remarked Kendal quietly; "those are dangerous words to utter."

He had just left the house when Willie's screaming reached a higher pitch than ever, and I hurried up-stairs in a rage, determined to exercise my authority for once, to show the child such an annoyance was unbearable. Pushing open the door of the room where Martha gave him his meals, I beheld a scene that fully accounted for his cries. The nurse held both his wrists in a cruel grasp, and was beating him unmercifully about the head.

"Say, I'm tipsy again, you rascal!" said she in thick, stupid tones. "You'll tell your pa I was tipsy all night, will you, when I was rolling in agony with the spasms? I've half a mind to kill you, I

have; and I will too, if you go tale-bearing to your pa!"

I wrenched the child from her hold, and confronted the astonished woman. My fear of intoxication was completely overpowered by my indignation, and I spoke calmly and decisively.

"Go to bed, Martha; you are unfit for your duties today. When you are better, I shall see you again."

Her angry gaze changed slowly into a dull stare as she perceived my firm expression, and she sank into an arm-chair, where I knew she would sleep off the effects of her over-indulgence. I slipped the door-key into my pocket, and retreated, in my excitement carrying Willie as easily as an infant. Frank's nurse looked thoroughly surprised when I entered her domain with my stepson sobbing hysterically in my arms; but my recital did not astonish her.

"I had no idea it was so bad as that, ma'am," said nurse, "for Martha keeps herself to herself, and seldom allows her fellow-servants inside her rooms; but we all suspected she drank, for we smelt spirits often enough."

"But why did nobody tell me?" I asked, crying myself as nurse gently revealed the blue marks on Willie's shoulders. "This child has been treated barbarously."

"Well, ma'am, we did n't think it our place to carry tales so long as you were satisfied. Many a time have I told Martha that Master Willie did n't ought to cry so much, but she always said she had your permission to punish him as she chose when he was troublesome."

I felt the reproach her words conveyed to my conscience, and I knew that it was deserved.

"Get him some breakfast, nurse," said I; "the things were only half laid on the table, and he has had nothing this morning. Now, Willie, I want to know all about Martha, — come, tell mamma everything."

"She has n't been quite so bad before," replied the little fellow, looking up into my face, "but she is always sipping some stuff from a bottle in her pocket, and it makes her so cross. Last night she was angry because I was in here playing with baby, and she sent me to bed without supper. She said that I took tales to the other servants, and that I had no business here; she told me you would n't have me touch baby because I was only his step-brother, and I was

in his way, and you 'd be glad if I was dead, — but that 's a story, is n't it?"

He fastened upon me his great earnest blue eyes, just like my husband's. I was crying fast, — crying away all my unnatural hardness, — and for answer I stooped down and kissed him.

"I knew it was a story, said Willie. "I do like you to nurse me, mamma; it feels like Grannie."

"Did Martha dress you this morning, Master Willie?" asked nurse, returning with some bread and milk and a little minced chicken.

"No, she sat up in the chair all night. She was asleep there this morning when I went in to see if breakfast was ready. I had dressed myself, and I woke her up and told her so. I began to cry, and said she was tipsy when she stared so oddly at me, and then she hit me because I tried to get away to tell papa."

"Master told me I was never to interfere with Martha, but just attend to baby," said nurse indignantly, "else I 'd have found out directly why he was screaming. Never mind, Master Willie; it 's all right now."

"Nurse," suggested I, "I think we could have Master Willie's little bed in here. I wish you could undertake both the children, or, at least, try it for a time. I can rely on you, and of course your wages would be altered. He would not be much in your way."

"I am quite agreeable, ma'am," said nurse. "Baby has taken wonderfully to Master Willie, and he always does what I tell him; but I can't have that naughty cough in my nursery, sir, I tell you."

"I don't cough for fun, nurse," declared Willie. "I 'll try to keep quiet, — I will indeed."

"He has a nasty hacking cough at nights," said nurse to me, when Willie, with the tears all dried, was playing bo-peep with baby in the *berceau*. "It goes right through you, ma'am. I doubt if he 's long for this world after all."

"What a foolish idea!" said I hastily, looking at the white face and slender frame, and wondering, with a sudden flash of horror, if my lack of love was thus to be punished by Heaven. The womanly yearnings, crushed hitherto by jealousy, broke down every barrier then. I was myself at last, and my heart opened wide to take in my husband's child.

I longed to see and speak to Kendal again, and looked forward anxiously to his return. I was sadly disappointed when Mr. Tudor came in to tell me that my husband, who shared his chambers, had been summoned to Exeter on legal business and might be detained some days. He had sent a list of certain requisites, and these I packed at once and despatched to the station to follow him. I could not bring myself to write one line of all that I felt.

Mr. Tudor soon relieved my disquietude as to dealing with Martha. After a brief interview between them, in which he acted for Kendal, she quietly accepted a month's money in lieu of notice, and bestowed herself and her belongings in a cab, with a few threats and impertinences concerning myself and her late situation which highly amused the cabman.

"She 's gone!" shouted Willie, clapping his thin hands for joy. "Won't I have a good time now, mamma?"

After this Willie's health did not seem to improve, and, broken-hearted, I realized one morning, as the rising sun was parting the gray clouds in the east, that all my care for my patient was in vain. A slight attack of pleurisy, anxiously watched by myself and a West-end physician I had summoned, had taken a fatal turn on the previous evening, and we had telegraphed directly to his father, who had proceeded to Ireland from Exeter.

Closer my boy clung to me with all his feeble strength. Baby was crying in the nursery, missing my presence there; but even his voice could not draw me from that bedside. I would have died myself to save my other child, cut off in the very blossom of his days,—a victim perhaps to the neglect which had left his warning cough unattended to. Unspeakably dear had Kendal's son become to me of late; his innocent lips had prattled to me of better things than my careless thoughts had hitherto heeded.

One evening footsteps came hurrying upstairs, and I was quickly pushed aside by my husband's hand. I knew what his first-born was to him as I noticed his evident distress. His emotion pained the child, who was placid himself with the shadow of coming peace.

"Dr. Steane, tell me there is hope,—there must be hope!" appealed my husband to the physician, who stood at the foot of the bed.

"I 'm not afraid, papa dear," said Willie faintly, as Dr. Steane sadly shook his head.

"But I cannot—I cannot let you go, my poor little boy!"

A solemn silence fell over us, broken only by my husband's sobs; my own heart was too full to find relief in tears. I started convulsively when at the last there came a great cry, "My mamma!" and the little arms were stretched toward me. How could I ever have willfully put away my boy's tenderness? Just then I would at any cost have purchased a renewal of our term of love.

The rest is all to me as a dream,—a vision of frightened faces, morning shadows superseding the candlelight, and a little figure calm as the flowers on which the sun was rising,—an indistinct memory of stifled sobs, agitated whispers, a baby's cries, and through it all a boy's clear voice faintly recalling his daily prayer:—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Steal upon a little child."

I knew I was forgiven as I stood in the stillness of the solemn room and tenderly looked my last at him who would so soon be removed from our sight. The heavenly calm of little Willie's face spoke peace to my troubled soul; the love that had given him rest held pardon too for me. I could not bear to remain there long; one mother's kiss I gave him,—a parting kiss that refused to part,—and then I left him as before, with the pure white roses strewn around him and the lilies on his breast. And my husband, who had followed me in unperceived, took me in his arms with a fondness that had a new element in it.

"Dear love," said he, pressing his lips to mine, "I have learnt all now; and what remains untold I read in his eyes that morning as he looked upon you. Heaven reward you, my Millicent!"

I put down my head upon his shoulder and cried there for the first time since our sorrow,—cried out all the feelings I had no words to tell.

MY SUMMER BOARDERS.

BY AUGUST BELL.

As I was straightening the front chambers this morning, and airing the best sheets, with the scent of the roses coming in through the open window, I got thinking of how I fixed the house up to take boarders two years ago. It was the first time we had ever done such a thing, but folks were beginning to come to our town pretty thick summers for the sake of the healthy air they said, and the fine scenery. So when old Mr. Hopleigh came down from the city with his gold-headed cane and his commanding air, and offered me fifty dollars a week to board his family for the summer, I was tempted, as you may say, and said yes.

It was early in June when they arrived in full force, Mr. and Mrs. Hopleigh, the children, the trunks and the poodle-dog, and took possession of all my best rooms. I had my hands full then, cooking for so many, and actually when the minister came to call on me one baking-day, I had to ask him right into the kitchen, because I could not leave the oven. He had come in on an errand, he said, to ask if I could take another boarder. A young lady teacher from a neighboring town, who had brought a letter of introduction to him, was looking for a place where she could spend her vacation quietly and get rested. She was poor, of course, and could not pay a high price, but

would make me very little trouble he was sure. I thought the matter over while I carried a tin of drop-cakes to the pantry, and then I told him yes, I would take her. For there was the little blue room at the top of the back stairs, without any one in it, and one more at the table where there were already so many would hardly make any difference at all.

So she came, and was so quiet and unobtrusive that I hardly realized she was in the house. The summer might have passed and gone without my ever giving her any especial thought, if it had not been for the notice the Hopleighs took of her. Mr. Hopleigh was a broad pompous man who always wanted his own way. He read the papers in a loud voice, and smoked, and had a few good stories that he told over and over. I am sure I got tired enough of them at last, and the poetry he had by heart was even more trying. But Lotty White laughed right out at the table at one of his funny stories before she had been there two days, and he immediately declared her a very bright clever little girl, and insisted that she should sit with his family, and walk and drive with them on all occasions. Mrs. Hopleigh followed her husband's lead, and petted the girl in a good many pleasant little ways, told her how sweet her voice was,

and what pretty hair she had, sprinkled violet perfume on her handkerchiefs, and gave her a coquettish little plume for her hat. Lotty White was pleased, it was all such a novelty to her, and she laughed and chatted in a girlish open-hearted way, and sang her simple little songs, and played with the Hopleigh children.

"She don't look like a school-teacher," said Mrs. Hopleigh one day, watching her reflectively; "she looks too happy."

Well, she was a happy-looking girl, and a good-natured one too. She used to come out into the kitchen sometimes and wipe up my dishes for me, and sometimes she would set the table when I was hurried. That was along when she first came, but afterwards as she became more taken up with the Hopleighs and with Rose Maury, she did not run into the kitchen so often. It was all right she shouldn't. Let girls enjoy themselves while they can, is my motto. But it was then I first began to suspect that our Ben liked her. Ben is my sister's son, who has lived with us ever since he was a boy, and when I saw his eyes follow her so wistful as she passed by him, pleasant and careless, and went out in the porch to sit by the hour with the Hopleighs, I felt tempted to say, "Never mind, Ben, maybe it will come all right yet."

Not that I thought there was any hope for him, however, for one day when Rose Maury came over for a chat, and she and Lotty sat on the bench outside the window where I was hemming towels, they grew confidential, as girls will sometimes, and while Rose owned to being heart free, Lotty confessed that there was somebody "O, so splendid, and so very handsome," who had said a great many flattering things to her, though she was not really engaged to him yet.

"But you will be," said Rose, gayly, "and when you're married I'll send you a wedding present!"

The Maurys were new-comers. It was the first of August when they came to board at Captain Penrose's across the way.

"The Maurys of Buffalo," I heard Mr. Hopleigh explaining to his wife. "Very wealthy people, very proper people indeed to cultivate."

Rose Maury, though an heiress, was a gay lively girl, and having none of her young friends near her, she made a friend of Lotty, so one way and another there was a great

deal of going back and forth between the two houses.

It very soon struck me that Mr. Hopleigh felt a special interest in the Maurys. After having a long private talk with his wife one day, he wrote a letter which he gave me to mail as I was just going down to the store. It was addressed to Robert Clyde, Esq. It came to me in a flash as things will sometimes, that this was the brother Bob I had heard the children talk about, a son of Mrs. Hopleigh by a previous marriage, and that he was wanted to come and pay court to Miss Maury.

About a week after that the Penroses had a party; they always had parties on the smallest pretext, and this time it was a niece come to make a visit and to be entertained. Of course all my boarders were invited and Ben, too, and very beaming he looked as he escorted Lotty across the street. I could hear the music and dancing, as I sat up doing my week's mending, and it sounded pretty enough. All of a sudden, in came Lotty at the front door in a great hurry, she had torn her dress and wanted a needle and thread quick. No one knew she had come, and she said she must get back before the next dance, for she had promised it to Ben. So I sat down and helped her, and we had hardly finished when somebody gave a great rap at the hall door. I went to open it, and there stood a handsome young fellow in a linen duster, with a carpet sack in his hand.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hopleigh board here I believe," he said presently. "Can I see them?"

I was just beginning to tell him where they were, when Lotty who had peeped out from the sitting-room, came forward with a glad light in her eyes, and with both hands extended, said:

"O Rob, how did you find out where I was!"

A more thoroughly surprised man I am sure there never was, but he did not look displeased either, as he said, brightly:

"Why, you here, Lotty? I thought you were in Medford, and I meant to go round that way next week. Father and mother board here, I suppose, you know?"

"I never dreamed they were your folks," said Lotty, blankly, "the name is so different!" And she looked really disappointed as she realized it was not herself he had come to find.

Meanwhile I had lit the astral lamp in the

parlor, and the young man led Lotty to the sofa, where they began a long eager conversation. I went back to my work in the other room, not wishing to intrude, and thought to myself that poor Ben's promised dance was utterly forgotten. A half hour slipped by, and then Lotty looked in at the door to say that she was going back to the Penroses, and Mr. Clyde was going with her. I never was used to sitting up for party-goers, and finding myself presently nodding, I left the lights burning and the door unlocked and went to bed.

The next morning at the breakfast-table I was surprised to see Lotty and Mr. Clyde meet very formally, and not at all like old friends. Mr. Hopleigh was more beaming than usual, while his wife sipped her cup of tea indolently, and said it had been a very pretty party. In the course of the forenoon Mr. Hopleigh ordered a carriage, and with his stepson took Mrs. Maury and Rose to drive, while Lotty uninvited remained at home, sitting on the doorsill and meekly doing fancy work. She came into the kitchen a little later, however, and essayed a forlorn little explanation. Mr. Clyde did not want his people to know how long he had known her, she said, they might think strange of it, and might find fault because they had not been told before.

I could have told her on the spot that such doings never ended in good, and that Robert Clyde would never be any more to her than he was that minute, but there was an appealing look in her eyes that made me desist, so I only said of course they knew best about their own affairs, and I should not mention the matter at all, if that was what she was afraid of.

The next day there was horseback riding, but Robert and Rose dashed on ahead, while Lotty ambled patiently along with the children on ponies. The next day on the croquet ground it was the same, Robert always with Rose, speaking pleasantly now and then to Lotty, but always as if she were a new acquaintance. And so it went on from day to day, Rose Maury growing evidently interested in her handsome attendant, while Lotty looked on with sad-eyed wonder, but with a growing pride which forbade her to remonstrate.

"I believe my lover is just as handsome and just as splendid as yours!" whispered Rose playfully one day, and still Lotty made no sign.

The first of September was rapidly approaching, when Lotty's school term would begin again in Medford, and she made her preparations to go. The Hopleighs were still kind, though not effusively so; they would have given Lotty a good many little things, but she declined them all, except some keepsakes from the children who clung about her in real despair at losing their patient story-teller. The day before she went away, there was an expedition on foot to the woods to gather ferns and mosses, and there were chances enough at that time for Robert Clyde to seek one last little interview, and to say a heartfelt word. But he did not, he staid by Rose all the time, and Ben was the only one to help Lotty to carry her basket, and to climb the rocks.

She went away the next day to Medford to take up her work again, and I was glad for her own sake to have her go. Young Clyde departed, too, soon after, but letters came regularly for Rose, and before the Hopleighs returned to the city in September, they told me confidentially that it was an engagement. But I offered no congratulations.

I have never seen any of the Hopleighs since, but a year ago when it was midsummer, I wrote to Lotty and told her to come again if she would. And she came, dear, brave, patient Lotty, undaunted by her lonely year of plodding work, and really three times the girl she was the year before.

And now comes the best part of the whole. She appreciated Ben at last, good, honest, sterling Ben, and I know she loved him to-day better than she ever loved Clyde. There, I have told you a long story, and got my work done at the same time, and there are Lotty and Ben out in the garden calling us. Come and look at the asters, I pride myself on asters, and after that you must really stay to tea and taste of Lotty's delicious biscuits!

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GOOD MANNERS.—It is a rule of manners to avoid exaggeration. A lady loses as soon as she admires too easily and too much. In man or woman the face and person lose power when they are on the strain to express admiration. A man makes his inferiors his superiors by heat. Why need you, who are not a gossip, talk as a gossip, and tell eagerly what the neighbors or the journals say? State your opinions without apology.